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FRANCE AND AMERICA

Some Experiences in Coöperation

BY

ANDRÉ TARDIEU

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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FRANCE AND AMERICA

CHAPTER I

CONTRASTS

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CHAPTER I

CONTRASTS

I

The Fundamental Error

Twice within the sesquicentury — in 1781 and 1918 — a great achievement has crowned the combined efforts of France and the United States. The memory of these triumphs is so graven in our hearts that we are wont to take 'entente' between the two countries for granted; and to think of it as spontaneous, instinctive, and complete.

Thousands of orators have proclaimed this 'entente,' only to be contradicted by events. After wars waged in common, separate treaties; after battles fought shoulder to shoulder, the isolation of peace; after protestations of loyalty to principles, inability to agree on their application. After visionaries had asserted that 'entente' was a law of nature, exceptions proved innumerable. Seeing this the nations learned to doubt. Because too much had been promised to them, they were perplexed when performance failed. Convinced of their own honesty of purpose, they were vexed by disappointing morrows. Forgetful of results, they remembered only failures. Such is the danger of propitiatory orations which, extolling al-

leged harmonies of destiny, pay scant heed to stern realities, to fixed national and individual traits, or to basic differences that warp the fate of nations.

I grant that the first fact, clear as day, is the intuitive friendship of our two peoples for one another. Their material, sentimental, and spiritual ties are of long standing. Both love to dwell on them. De Tocqueville in France; Parkman and Finley in America, gave voice to the past. Out of the mists there loomed the mariners of Dieppe and Saint-Malo, of La Rochelle and Rouen; the odyssey of the Griffon discovering waterways which now carry the wealth of a continent; Jacques Cartier, the explorer of the Saint Lawrence and of the Rapids; Champlain, the Recollets, the Jesuits, the trappers, and woodsmen and canoeists of the Great Lakes; Marquette, La Salle, Frontenac; their predecessors or disciples, Joliet, Tonty, Hennepin, Radisson, Groseillier, Iberville, Bienville, La Harpe, Lesueur, the Verendrys, heroes of the Mississippi, that great artery of American life.

Those Frenchmen left their mark! One may trace it in the cities: Detroit, Duluth, Saint Louis, Racine, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac; in the civilization of the West, so different from that of New England. Despite official indifference, despite the disdain of Louis XIV for 'the useless enterprises of the Sieur de la Salle' and the gibes of Voltaire about 'acres of snow,' mutual attraction ripened into the Alliance of 1778. France and the United States knew little of one another — how little is strikingly shown by Abbé Raynal's book — but they loved one another. Benjamin Franklin

was received in Paris as the type of superman conceived by our philosophers. A mysterious outpouring of affection attracted the two countries. Their political association was not the result of self-interest alone. In its inception the Alliance was one of brotherly love. Franklin and Jefferson were welcomed in Paris as effusively and as triumphantly as Lafayette and Rochambeau in America. France lent her strength to save the new-born American liberty from certain death. Gérard, her first envoy to Philadelphia, was carried to Congress by the enthusiasm of a whole people.

Thus was implanted in thousands of hearts a priceless friendship whose memorable duration deserves more consideration than it usually receives. An acknowledged debt of gratitude for decisive military aid; the moral solidarity of two revolutions whose similarity of occurrence concealed their differences; the pride of having given two Republics to the world within a single decade; the charm of personal relations; the lure of common ideals and aspirations; the attraction of a very young people for a very old civilization — all these feelings still endure, and this book is written to show how, in the darkest hours, this wealth of friendship, inherited from bygone generations, remained intact even when left fallow. The first year of the war proved this. Perhaps even more so, the persistent desire to work together which, in ways all too little known, has survived the comradeship of arms.

This friendship is the first fact which offers itself to our analysis. To acknowledge it, is but right; but

to do no more than acknowledge it, is wrong. Because this friendship, although the first, is not the only fact we have to consider, and to be honest we must view it in the light of another fact equally plain. This other fact is that our two countries, bound by such ties of sympathy, have never made a combined effort that was not followed by immediate rupture; indeed in all other circumstances the absence of conflict can only be explained by the lack of contact. May I add that the short periods of political coöperation — less than ten years in all, out of one hundred and forty — were the result not of sentiment, but of interest; and that as soon as interest lapsed, sentiment did not suffice to maintain coöperation.

When we became allies in 1778, it was the last thing one might have expected. To New England colonists, France was the enemy. Against France, Benjamin Franklin had drafted his plan of union in 1754. Against France, which hemmed in the colonies from the Saint Lawrence to the mouths of the Mississippi, George Washington had won his spurs. France was not only, as Boston averred, 'the ally of savages.' In Europe she was the champion of the Papacy, of monarchy, of war, of libertinism, and of all that was hateful to the descendants of the Pilgrims. When Vergennes and Franklin undertook to negotiate, public satisfaction was but a meagre cloak for the contrast of traditions and temperament. On the one side, Catholics and Royalists; on the other, Protestants and Democrats. They managed to sign a treaty which left the world agape, but never could agree upon their war aims: Louisiana, Canada, Newfoundland

were left out of the picture, hot-beds of impending conflict.

Five years passed, and the victorious end of the war marked the end of political agreement. Unknown to Vergennes, John Jay in 1782 negotiated a separate peace — just as, one hundred and thirty-nine years later, the United States was to sign the separate peace of 1921 with Germany. The French *chargé d'affaires*, Barbé-Marbois, stressed the point: 'A great Power makes no complaint. But it resents insult, and never forgets.' For ten years the cleavage grew: it was impossible to conclude even a treaty of commerce; in 1787 the abrogation of the Alliance, 'a legacy of the past,' as Hamilton coldly declared; in 1790, economic difficulties; in 1793, the proclamation of neutrality; in 1794, the treaty with England. I am well aware that it would have been folly for the United States to have again lent its soil to battle, and that abstention was the part of political wisdom. Nevertheless, George Washington's decision placed Franco-American relations beyond the pale of sentimental affinity and democratic analogy. At the very time when the French Republic was the European counterpart of the American Commonwealth, they came to the parting of the ways.

Already, preconceived ideas were vanishing before the onslaught of facts. Contact was not entirely lost. Factions continued to lend each other mutual support, but of real understanding there was none. The good people of Philadelphia were still thinking in terms of Montesquieu, when the drums of Santerre were beating on the Place de la Concorde at the foot of the

guillotine. Men wept here when speaking of Franklin, and there at mention of Lafayette's name. But John Quincy Adams reviled our 'thirty millions of atheists poisoned by philosophy.' Alexander Hamilton rent the 'great beast' to pieces. It was said that 'neither Nero nor Caligula had attained to the horror of the French Revolution.' Noah Webster described France as gone from papist superstition to rationalist superstition and rotten with demoniac mysticism. Jefferson himself on his return to America felt that he was compromised and weakened by Genet, the dangerous meddler who — like Bernstorff in 1917 — sought to influence American policy by party intrigue. The loose life of immigrants, such as Talleyrand, shocked the Puritan conscience. If Jay's treaty with England roused the ire of the American people, it was less out of love for France than out of hatred for the old country.

From 1794 to 1799, amid the clamour of the press, neutrality gave way to conflict. Customs on tobacco and cod-liver oil, questions of prizes and contraband, proved more potent than philosophical effusions. The Directorate refused to receive the American Minister, Charles Pinckney. When three other envoys arrived, Talleyrand satisfied his former grudges and his love of money by instigating through his agents, Hottinguer, Bellamy, and Hauteval, the unsavoury intrigue against them known as the 'X.Y.Z. affair' which crystallized public opinion in America against France. At this time Adet, our Minister in Washington, abandoned all hope of the friendship on which his predecessors had relied: 'Mr. Jefferson,' he wrote, 'is

an American and as such cannot be a sincere friend of ours, for Americans are the born enemies of all Europeans.' In 1798, war virtually existed. President John Adams called Washington to command the army. Vessels were armed by private subscription. Where were the pledges of 1778?

If calm returned under the Consulate, it was the work of events, not of men. The death of Washington gave Bonaparte, as First Consul, an opportunity for a theatrical manifestation. But his policy, inspired by the extreme views of our representatives in America, Moustier, Genet, Fauchet, tended to nothing less than the creation of a great French empire in the Mississippi Valley and led to the most perilous of crises; for already America was determined to be mistress of her own outlets. Jefferson wrote to Robert Livingston: 'We have ever looked to her [France] as our natural friend. . . . There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market. . . . The day that France takes possession of New Orleans, . . . we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation.' The Treaty of San Ildefonso, by which Spain ceded her Mississippi possessions to France, brought us within measurable distance of war; but the reverse of San Domingo and the peril in which he stood on the Continent obliged Bonaparte to forego his American ambitions and strengthen his European front. He sold Louisiana to the United States, and the course of history was changed. The vendor thus described the transaction: 'I have given Eng-

land a rival, who sooner or later will abase her pride.'

Then after the War of 1812 against England — an economic conflict, as devoid of pro-French sentiment as the Louisiana sale of pro-American feeling — a dumb and empty century began, a century during which we pledged our friendship time and again, with never a deed to prove it; a century during which our traditional friendship was preserved in many noble hearts; but a century during which French civilization was without the faintest influence on the prodigious fermentation of American life, during which we never met without the risk of conflict. So it was with French intervention in Spain under the Restoration; and with French intervention in Mexico under Napoleon III. The abortion of the Second Republic, the advent of the third Bonaparte, alarmed the American people. Prussia, having subscribed liberally to Northern loans during the Civil War, became an object of sympathy. In Berlin, the Minister of the United States, Bancroft, was on terms of intimacy with Bismarck, and when, in 1871, the unity of Germany was proclaimed at Versailles on the ruins of dismembered France, President Grant hailed the new nation in an enthusiastic message to the Congress.

Was Franco-American friendship dead? No! Forty-three years later, France, again invaded, found that friendship as ardent as ever. But, as in 1914, it was of no political worth. Neither the Government nor the people took any real interest in France. Besides, the prodigious prosperity of Germany under

the Hohenzollerns had made a deep impression. German science was supreme in the Universities and colleges. In 1908, Professor Münsterberg thought himself influential enough to challenge the writer's access to the Chair of French at Harvard University, and President Eliot's resistance surprised the German more than it angered him. France still had devoted friends, but they were on the defensive. James H. Hyde endowed classes to make France known, so it must be she was ignored. Barrett Wendell wrote books to defend her, so it must be she was attacked.

Much more could be said, but the meaning is clear. It is certain that, however great the potentiality of friendship between France and the United States, the difficulty of collaboration is equally great. Whosoever says to the contrary misleads our people, and paves the way through bitter disappointment to even worse misunderstanding. Let us paint the things as they are: that is our first duty. But is it enough to worship at the shrine of truth? No! Not if by explanation, things may be changed. Not if, by analyzing the origin and growth of nations, the causes of disease affecting their relations may be made clear — and perchance even a remedy found.

By the light of facts, old as well as new, public as well as private, this is the work to which I have set my hand. I am well aware that both Frenchmen and Americans are taught — and have been taught for a hundred and fifty years — that they were born to understand one another, and I see that very often they do not. I am well aware they are taught that their 'entente' is in the very nature of things, and I

see that the fruits thereof are scant and puny. Let us reverse this policy, and look before we talk.

If, from birth to maturity, we see conditions in France and the United States not only dissimilar, but opposite; if it appears that their past makes understanding not easy, but difficult; if, geographically, historically, politically, nationally, socially, intellectually, contrasts are more frequent than affinities — then, less concerned about mistakes, we shall be better able to devise a constructive policy along new and different lines.

'Entente,' people say, is natural. That, I say, is untrue; and, if untrue, it is better to know it than to pillow our sloth upon a belief contradicted by facts. It fell to my lot to represent my country in the second of the two great Franco-American achievements. More than any, I suffered from the long train of disagreement echoing down from 1796. That is why, to the illusion of haphazard collaboration and ready-made success, I oppose the necessity for constructive effort and tenacity of purpose. Franco-American friendship? None can be more fruitful if properly directed; none more barren if left to itself. This friendship must be ordered or it will be wasted. It must be organized or it will cease to be. That is the problem of to-morrow.

II

Two Peoples

The national formation of a people is governed by its distinctive characteristics. Physical composition, moral trend, rhythm of growth, volume of production, all mould a nation. In these things the world offers no analogy to the United States. But if antithesis be sought, France provides it.

A thousand years and more after the material and moral birth of our country, America was founded by an arrival of immigrants. The French come of hereditary homes. The founders of New England tore themselves from theirs. In a spirit of moral revolt or commercial adventure they decided to create a new home for themselves. They landed on inhospitable soil. In the wake of three explorations, Spanish, French, and English, which searching for ancient Asia had placed the door of America ajar, they pushed on — forced westward by unrelenting fate — the Sons of Movement, its very incarnation! Beyond the wooded shores, virgin forests and boundless plains — whose appeal Daniel Webster was to voice — stretched before them. The West called them. The West was to take them for its own, though they tarried awhile in the east, a mere halt in an eternal exodus.

As water glides over marble, the human mass moved on. Instead of secular abiding, which within their narrow limits has crystallized the peculiar traits of our French provinces, there was continual change. Men of the Carolinas and Georgia moved onward to

Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas; from Virginia and Kentucky they went towards Idaho, Illinois, and Missouri; from Boston and New York towards Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, and Minnesota. Every decade, for more than a century, they opened up territories the size of Switzerland, England, Italy, France. In 1787, thirteen States; in 1926, thirty-five more, the youngest of which is not twenty years old; whereas in France there is not a province whose historic origin does not hark back to Gallo-Roman times. In France villages which, unchanged, have seen twenty-five generations handing down the torch; a nation built up by the slow agglomeration of sedentary cells, close-huddled together. Across the ocean, the Covered Wagon trekking West; a land unretentive of man which but witnessed his passing. In place of an instinct to root, a will to uproot.

In the nineteenth century, these nomads passed through three successive phases of development, no equivalent for which can be found in France. First the squatter, whose sole wealth was his courage, who hewed down forests, tilled the virgin soil, sold his holding, and moved on. Then the farmer of some substance, who built and planted and reaped till the day came when, grown rich, he sought something better. Finally the capitalist who organized, exploited, and formed trusts when the law allowed. In vain one might seek the peasants of Millet's 'Angelus,' their feet rooted to the soil. The American farmer was migratory, and the enormous development of means of communication throughout the three million square miles which lay before him only increased his

mobility. His problem was not to win a limited harvest from the measured earth, but to find richer loam for increased production to meet ever-recurring demands. The idea was not, as in France, to endure; but to progress.

Houses rising from the ground were lived in before finished, sold before lived in. Cities? Ah, in vain one might seek the slow stratification of our French towns, growing on their old foundations, the superimposed layers of whose architecture reveal the variety of successive ages which contributed to their construction. The Western cities of America were mushroom growths of necessity; when necessity ceased, they disappeared. First, a railway station, then a bank, a tramway, and a store; their birth dictated by a man or by the location of a railroad. The rails, which merely served to link our French towns, actually created cities in America. The initial population renewed itself within a few months. Men changed as rapidly as the tools; changed their calling as readily as their residence. Space attracted them; its call never went unheeded. There was no near perspective to stabilize; only a distant perspective to mobilize.

This new life created a new race. Two initial characteristics of which France knows nothing: extreme insecurity of conditions, and extreme equality of opportunity. A fair chance is the essence of this life, and may the best man win. Men who make good under these conditions have nothing in common with street-bred villagers who live and die in the shadow of belfries ten centuries older than themselves. Ignorant of localization, they are ignorant of specialization; that

dominant characteristic of France, as Henry James saw it. The son does not wait, as with us, for the death of his father to carry on his work in the same place. Every one makes his own way in life, and then proceeds to change it. Every day the book of life records a new picture. At a time when France produced M. Guizot and M. Royer Collard, what was the American type? Andrew Jackson, lawyer, judge, planter, party leader, merchant, general, Congressman, President; neither cultivated nor classified; a Jack of all trades and all times.

A new race as compared to Europe, but also as compared to New England. The coast in the eighteenth century was but the frontier of Europe. The Middle West and the West were to be a new world. Colonial families, which from Mayflower days had been anchored to the Atlantic, looked with suspicion on the colossus growing up at their back door. Josiah Quincy waxed indignant at 'the preponderance of these Westerners in councils to which they ought never to have been admitted.' What gibes were hurled against 'the savages of Missouri' and the 'mixed population of the Mississippi.' If the East felt itself so utterly different from the coming race, what shall be said of Europe? If Boston could not understand Detroit, shall Paris understand Denver?

Yet the West — as Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and F. J. Turner were to make clear — fashioned America. Listen to Emerson: 'Happily for us, since steam has made a mere pond of the ocean, our vigorous Rocky West is introducing a new continental spirit into our nation. Thus shall we attain to an

American genius.' Just as the Mediterranean fashioned Greece, so the West fashioned America. From the immense reservoir of 200,000,000 acres formed by the Ordinance of 1787, there issued a national type as different from the Puritans of New England as from the Cavaliers of Virginia, which emancipated itself from European influences as it moved westward. It was the West that made the United States democratic by its insistence on universal suffrage. It was the West that furnished the melting-pot for immigration. When the West reached maturity, the United States became a great Power.

This people marching towards the promised land did not look backward, as ours, to seek whys and wherefores; but forward to discover hopes. 'Who went farthest? I would go farther.' To this cry of Walt Whitman, Longfellow answered, 'Let the dead past bury its dead.' And all Emerson's philosophy: 'The respect for the doings of our ancestors is a false sentiment. Neither Greece, nor Rome; nor the three treatises of Aristotle, nor the three Kings of Cologne, nor the college of the Sorbonne, nor the Edinburgh Review is to command, any longer.' When nearer to us, Henry van Dyke sang the glories of Europe, it was not without this restriction: 'But the past counts too much for her.'

In this land of freedom which it does not fill,[1] the American people has for a century lived a life that has nothing in common with our life. When, crystallized

[1] The average density of population in the United States is only thirteen inhabitants to the square kilometre, less by far than the density of the least populated of our French departments.

by continuity of abode and the great age of its civilization, the French nation had taken to heart the lessons of the Renaissance, of the Grand Siècle and of the Revolution; the American people, like Siegfried, heard only the murmur of the forest. In the silence of nature, deaf to philosophical abstractions, it caught only familiar sounds, the paddle of the canoeist, the axe of the woodsman, the rifle of the hunter. Admire or contemn, be thrilled or angered by this rough, imperfect, unfinished but formidable poetry of human effort conquering a new world: you cannot escape its meaning. Between the two communities, French and American, there is a chasm wider than the Atlantic: the difference between stability and motion.

These two opposite traits, dominating the lives of individuals, are reflected with all their consequences in the lives of our two peoples. From the dawn of her history, France has felt herself confined to a limited territory within boundaries conceived by all and therefore considered natural, a territory she has spent centuries in acquiring and safeguarding. Situated at a cross-roads where all sought to pass, the Frenchman has held his land only by defending it, and this gave birth to the two conceptions nearest to his heart, the conception of frontiers and the conception of invasion.

On the threshold of his development came successive hordes of barbarians, Huns, Vandals, Visigoths, Arabs, Norsemen. Then from the end of the Middle Ages on, the constant struggle against two convergent dangers from which there was no respite: the English danger and the German danger: the constant care of the Valois as of the Capetians, of the Bourbons as of

the Valois, of Clemenceau as of Richelieu. An old problem, this of Security. In the course of centuries the compelling need of protection has buttressed the most varied régimes: Feudalism, Monarchy, Revolution, Empire, Republic. The German who standing on Montmartre in 1814 exclaimed, 'Nine centuries ago our Emperor Otho planted his eagles on these slopes,' admirably expressed the defensive destiny of France. A peasant race wrought into an army to guard a soil which it could hold only by making it impregnable.

Nothing of the kind in the United States. Since their independence, the Colonies have known but one short invasion in 1812, and no foreign peril. From the North, a few months of war, followed by perpetual peace. From the South, at times vexation, never anxiety. East and West, the ocean. From 1776 to 1917 only three foreign wars. In 1812, against England, in 1845, against Mexico, in 1898, against Spain. Wars, none of which compare to the wars France, five times invaded in the same period, has fought within her own borders. The very formation of the continental domain of the United States — from 1787 to 1912, when the last of the forty-eight States was admitted — proceeded, except in 1845, either by bloodless occupation, by negotiation, or by purchase. In a century and a half the United States has not had ten years of foreign war. France has been at war for three fourths of her history of twenty centuries.

So the American frontier has nothing in common with the French frontier. The word is the same in the two languages, but does not express the same idea.

The Frenchman's frontier is a fortified line on which he fights and dies, a line changed by wars and treaties. The Frenchman's frontier is the soldier. The American's frontier was not a line, but a zone; a zone displaced not by war, but by labour. It was the lengthening shadow civilization cast upon the land. The American's frontier was not the soldier, but the pioneer. The part English and Germans played in the life of France, was played here by Nature. Nature had to be conquered, not armed foes. The United States is divided from its neighbours by geographical lines dotted with custom-houses. It has no Vauban.

A wide difference results in the fundamental national tenets. Wars that count in the minds of Frenchmen are foreign wars. Americans think only of their civil wars. To us the word 'war' conjures up, in an outpouring of hate, of sorrow and of hope centering around a foreign foe, all the glory and the glamour of our past: the Hundred Years' War, the Thirty Years' War, the Seven Years' War, the wars of the Revolution, of the Empire, of the Republic. Americans think of the War of Independence and of the Civil War. Listen to this elderly Southern dame and her memories of war: she tells of Lee, not of Pershing. In the United States the idea of foreign danger is neither spontaneous nor familiar. To die for one's country is by no means axiomatic. The defense of territorial integrity, the ruling instinct of a Frenchman, is but a meaningless phrase to an American.

For a hundred years the same was true of the idea

of nationality. The French, whose intestine controversies have run the gamut of internecine strife, enshrine the idea of nationality and hold it aloof from their civil dissensions. Although in the nineteenth century one fourth of the States of the Union were to raise the banner of Secession, there existed in France as early as the Middle Ages that will to live together which furnished Renan with his definition of a nation. Before Joan of Arc, we had the Grand Ferré, and farther back one traces the same spirit in the levies of Bouvines, in the popular uprising to repel the German invasion of 1124, even in the attempts at coalition which, under the Carolingians and the Merovingians, followed the parcelling of the land.

National spirit — a community instinct above all else which creates, in the service of the country, a duty above all duties, an instinct bred by invasion and frontiers — is the very soul of France. Even in feudal days, dealings with abroad discredited the Connétable de Bourbon, as later they discredited Condé and the *émigrés*, allies of the Spaniards or allies of Brunswick. In 1526, the jurists assembled at Cognac during the captivity of Francis I declared that the King had no power to alienate by treaty a single foot of French soil, thus anticipating, curiously enough, by three and a half centuries the Declaration of Bordeaux, protesting against the cession of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. Thus Frenchmen for hundreds of years have placed national unity above all internal or foreign considerations, or, more simply, have not looked upon it as open to discussion. But at all times and for many and various reasons, national unity has

been a matter of discussion in the United States. It took the victory of 1918 to bring surcease.

The various phases of American history, birth, growth, maturity, all bear witness to this. National unity has been an artificial and quasi-secondary thing to Americans. Frenchmen have sacrificed both liberty and equality to it. When they followed Napoleon to the ends of Europe, when republicans of the Convention served the dictator of Brumaire, they did so only to preserve the 'conquests of the Revolution,' meaning national conquests and natural frontiers. Americans, on the contrary, were long reluctant to make the rights of individuals and of local communities subservient to national unity. In the elaboration of their Constitution, as in its application, they experienced great difficulty in choosing between the two. Let us put it in this way: whereas the French look upon the nation as basic, and upon civil liberty as a conquest of man; the United States look upon their individual liberties as a cause, upon their national unity as an effect. Liberty is a constant, nationality a variable.

The contrast is so important and usually so little understood, that I may be pardoned for insisting upon it. When the insurrection of 1773 began to simmer, was the revolutionary movement national? Not if one may judge by what Franklin and Marshall said a few years earlier: 'I never,' said the former, in 1760, 'heard anybody, drunk or sober, express the faintest desire for separation'; and three years later the latter recorded the general attachment to the motherland. Likewise in 1775, Alexander Hamilton

deplored 'the unfortunate quarrel' and hoped for 'a prompt reconciliation,' saying, 'I am a strong believer in a limited monarchy and a sincere well-wisher of the present Royal Family.' When war broke out, two thirds of the Colonies were loyalists or lukewarm. Even after Saratoga, many hesitated. The First Congress had no real power to act for the Nation. Once jealous of British rule, the Colonies remained jealous of one another.

When it became necessary to organize in order to endure, those who favoured a strong central government, Washington, Hamilton, Schuyler, Greene, were in a hopeless minority. The majority remained hostile. Had the Constitution been submitted to a referendum, it would have been rejected. The Constitutional Convention which adopted it, under financial and foreign pressure, wrote into it the maximum of States' rights and the minimum of federal power. Before they could obtain its ratification, Hamilton, Madison, and their friends had to fight hard in their own assemblies. 'The Constitution,' said John Quincy Adams, 'has been extorted from the grinding necessity of a reluctant nation.' In 1786, Massachusetts rose in arms against taxation. In 1788, it demanded amendments. At a time when the French Republic was proclaiming itself 'one and indivisible,' the American republic was upholding, as its most priceless possession, the rights of the States against federal unity.

This feeling was so strong that, to avoid giving offense, it was necessary to invent an artificial capital amidst the marshes of the Potomac. Pinckney's

phrase, 'Let us forge no new chains,' expressed the general feeling. Thousands of Americans looked upon their young government very much as they had looked upon the rusty régime of George III. Jay said: 'I am uneasy and apprehensive, more so than during the war.' Washington, importuned by the thousand exigencies of unswerving localism, asked: 'Yes or No, are we a Nation?' At a time when French *sans-culottes* were hastening to the frontier with cries of 'Vive la Nation,' American clergymen were invited to change the form of common prayer and instead of 'God save Our Country,' which shocked the traditions of towns and counties, to say, 'God Save the United States.'

What followed is history, but the beginnings throw light upon the tragedy. In 1798, the Resolutions of Virginia, although the work of two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, enunciated the principles which were to give rise to secession. The North in turn took its stand against union in connection with the proposed acquisition of Louisiana. In 1803, Massachusetts asserted that the entry of Louisiana into the federation would give its members the right to withdraw, and four years later, in 1807, the people of Boston were for separation rather than to prepare, by the purchase of Louisiana, 'the tyranny of the South.' In 1812, Congress declared war on England, without, however, voting the necessary credits; but half the Northern States refused their troops or did not permit them to fight outside their own borders: 'It is like a corpse tied to a living body,' complained Jefferson. Ten days after the British

entered Washington, the troops of the Massachusetts militia were withdrawn from the federal service. The English general reported: 'Two-thirds of our Canadian army are eating beef supplied by American contractors.' Later, when the war had to be paid for, the North said, 'The South and West made the war — Mr. Madison's War — let them pay for it.' And the purse-strings were pulled tight.

Then came the beginning of the great crisis which for fifty years was to place American unity in jeopardy. No Frenchman of those days could have understood or even conceived the historic dialogue between Jackson and Calhoun which foreshadowed the drama of Civil War.

'I drink,' said the former, 'to our federal union [meaning national union]. It must be preserved.'

And the latter replied:

'The Union — next to our liberty the most dear.'

In France, during these stormy days, the Restoration and the Monarchy of July were obliged, despite their origin, to give heed to the popular clamour against the Treaty of 1815, and to adopt the policy of their political opponents for the reconstitution of national unity. In France, revolution followed revolution. The cleavage between the parties widened, but who dreamed of the partition of France? It was just the opposite in the United States. Whether anent the tariff under Jackson, or anent slavery under Buchanan, one heard of nothing but the sundering of the Union. The South looked upon secession as a right. In the North, many thought likewise. Winfield Scott pleaded that the sisters be allowed to part

in peace. Horace Greeley also. For years severance seemed more likely than the maintenance of the Union.

And yet the Union was to survive, but thanks to whom and at what price? Thanks to one of those unique men who rise to great emergencies and of which there are but few in a century. At the price of the most awful of civil wars. Amid the chaos of contradictory compromises accumulated since 1820, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed imprescriptible union, as we French understand it. 'Union comes before the Constitution: Union comes before the States themselves. My paramount object is to save the Union and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it. If I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do it.' A marvellous definition of national opportunism, whereby kings and people made France what it is, whereby the United States was to be saved. Marvellous indeed — but how repugnant to the public spirit of the times. It was no sooner uttered than the cannon roared its reply.

And yet the North still hesitated, stirred though it was by the imperious genius whose vision outstripped his time. Desertions, conscription riots, pacifist manifestations, invectives of Vallandigham, 'Your trophies are but tombs. Make Peace!'; copperhead intrigues; McClellan arrayed against Lincoln; hosts of Democrats demanding immediate negotiations; the heroic resistance of the South, serving a lost cause

with the most ardent faith. Up to the very end, thousands upon thousands on both sides asked themselves, in their heart of hearts, whether Liberty was not more precious than Union. An issue so utterly incomprehensible to the Frenchman of 1860 that he took no interest in a cause, the inception, meaning, and aim of which passed his understanding.

The result, a miracle of human genius, surprised the most ardent. Whitman's burning lines to pacified America betrayed astonishment: 'Thou a world, with thy vast geography, manifold, different and far flung, gathered by thee into Union with a common tongue, a common destiny, indivisible for all time.' Indivisible? That was the whole issue. Lincoln solved it against the coalition of economic interests and constitutional scruples. But it was to reappear under another guise, no less foreign to our French life, no less difficult for us to understand: Immigration.

No one claims unity of race for France. There is no such thing as unity of race. At the font of ours, one finds Iberian, Ligurian, Celtic, Roman, German, Arab, and Norse strains. But I do say that in fifteen hundred years those varied strains have been welded into tempered mettle, unalloyed during all those fifteen centuries by any great foreign influx. In the nineteenth century, the population of France doubled by natural increase, but in this increase immigration played no part worth mentioning. In the United States the four million colonists of the end of the eighteenth century have grown into 117 millions — by immigration. While France grew from 1 to 2, the United States passed from 1 to 25; it was peopled, not

from within, but from without, in the first place by Western and Northern Europe, later by Eastern and Southern Europe. A fact far-reaching in importance; unfathomed in its consequences.

Thus was manufactured a modern nation of a unique character. Of 117,000,000 Americans, less than 59 per cent were born in the United States of native-born parents. The remaining 41 per cent — nearly half the nation — is made up of negroes who cannot be assimilated (9.7 per cent), or of whites incompletely assimilated of whom some are foreign-born (13.4 per cent), some born of two foreign-born parents (13.2 per cent), and some of parents only one of whom is native-born (5.8 per cent). Every American village is a melting-pot in miniature. In opposition to our French village whose families have been akin for centuries, we have here immigrants from all parts, many recently arrived. Some do not even speak English. Others have learned, God knows how. Many bear the stigma of the brutal transplantation to which they were subjected in their youth and of ensuing misfortune. Attracted, especially in the cities, to others of their own race, they offer more or less resistance to that assimilation which material interest, railroads, newspapers, schools, churches, and welfare-workers press upon them. How many years must pass before their reactions become exclusively and spontaneously American!

Another problem, which France has never even suspected: the problem of a hyphenated citizenship and a foreign vote. For these millions of naturalized citizens vote, and their numbers often constitute the

majority. What if a conflict arises between their American interests and their hereditary instincts? The Frenchman going to vote may ask what the Royalists will do? what the Republicans will do? what the Socialists? or the Catholics? At no time in history has he had to ask himself, 'How will Frenchmen of German origin vote? or how Frenchmen of Irish origin?' Yet this question crops up in the United States at every national election. To the causes of internal division which exist here as elsewhere, are added foreign causes of division which must be taken into account. An American citizen is constantly subjected to two allegiances: one State, the other Federal. In addition there are days when he may hear within his heart two countries calling: the new one and the old.

The average Frenchman cannot easily conceive the gravity of this dualism. But the American Government and those upon whom it weighs must at all times take it into account. When he cast his vote for war in 1917, Warren G. Harding said: 'I reached a stage where I doubted if we had that unanimity of sentiment which is necessary to the preservation of this free government,' and French readers wondered what he meant. But his colleagues of the Senate understood. All knew the necessity of forecasting the varying reactions of a heterogeneous people. All knew that the Federal Government had never been able to rely on national waves of enthusiasm such as caused France to rise as one man in 1793, in 1815, in 1914, to rely on a living force of national tradition, such as in France has survived all changes of régime:

Louis-Philippe bringing back from Saint Helena the ashes of Napoleon; Republicans invoking the treaties of Louis XIV; the sons of Bretons who fought at Crécy and Agincourt looking upon battles, which arrayed their sires against the King of France, as national disasters.

In short, to build up and maintain its national unity, the United States has had to accomplish tasks from which France has been spared. Under pressure of two circumstances: the interpretation of the Constitution and the composition of the Nation, it has been obliged to solve problems our country has never had to face. After its institutions had been defined, the atavistic instinct of part of its people led the American Commonwealth to treat as a secondary and amendable thing that which in France we hold to be primary and intangible. Whether it be Andrew Jackson at odds with the champions of nullification; Lincoln overcoming secession; McKinley or Wilson, on the eve of two wars, gauging the strength of a national union; the Federal Government could never disregard the possibility of a cleavage which France has never had to fear. Was the danger exaggerated? Perhaps, for the war of 1917 was a splendid test of national unity. But up to the World War, the issue was an open one. It can be summed up in a word often heard in the American Congress: Americanism. Who in France ever preached Francism!

So the lives of the two nations present contrasts galore. Another must be mentioned, a matter not of substance but of size. Between the twenty centuries of France's growth within her limited compass, and

the colossal and forced development of the United States, no common measure exists. Contemporary France provides the spectacle of a civilization slowly evolved on a territory little more than two hundred thousand square miles in extent; the United States that of a civilization improvised on a continent as big as Europe. France presents a finished picture; the United States one that is only blocked in. Despite the twenty-fold increase of its population, the density of the United States is only on an average thirty-four inhabitants to the square mile against nearly two hundred in France, and in some of the States it is only from one to five. This expresses the contrast between a stabilized nation living on a land long since partitioned and an ever-changing nation occupying open spaces. In discussing them it is necessary to retain a sense of proportion.

This new difficulty, which proceeds from the whole, becomes plainer when examined in detail. In 1790, the United States had six towns of more than 8000 inhabitants, one of which had 33,000. In 1925, it had seventy-one cities of more than 100,000, of which nineteen had more than 250,000, ten more than 500,000, and five more than 1,000,000 inhabitants. In France, Paris alone had more than 1,000,000, and only fourteen cities exceeded 100,000 inhabitants. Production increased on the same scale. Western land, brought under cultivation from 1870 to 1880, exceeded the area of France. From 1890 to 1900 it exceeded that of France, England, and Germany together. Coal output passed from 15,000,000 tons in 1871 to 429,000,000 tons in 1907, when American production of iron

and steel for the first time exceeded the combined production of France, England, and Germany. The United States has 6,500,000 farms worth $41,000,000,000 and yielding $8,500,000,000 a year; 246,000 miles of railways carrying a billion passengers and 2,500,000,000 tons of freight every year. Eighteen million houses shelter 21,000,000 families of which 9,000,000 own their own dwellings. There are 12,000,000 depositors whose bank deposits amount to $7,500,000,000; 271,000 public schools with 22,000,000 pupils; 670 universities with 500,000 students; 3000 public libraries with 75,000,000 books. A total wealth of $225,000,000,000.

Contemplation of these figures has led Europe and France to picture to themselves the United States as a country of unlimited material prosperity, of railways, of ports, of factories, of skyscrapers, of tramways, of automobiles, of elevators, and of telephones; a country of high wages where dollars grow on trees; Eldorado of the daring and hope of the disinherited. Thus, amid the shrieking of sirens and the whistles of locomotives, is America as the majority of Frenchmen see her. And seeing her thus is enough to prevent their judging her accurately. First from lack of proportion, as I have said, but also by reason of the incompleteness of this simplified vision. For behind the American setting, there is the American soul. Behind the difference in size are essential differences.

I have attempted to show these differences on a national plane. Birth, growth, foreign relations, ideals of collective life, composition and proportion; everywhere we find contrasts where preconceived ideas

announced affinities. Here is a first obstacle, which must be broken down or overcome if we are to work together. As nations, France and the United States are not of the same feather.

III

Two Democracies

Different national formations? Yes, will doubtless be conceded. But can the identity of institutions be denied? France and the United States are two Republics. The two are founded on universal suffrage and the sovereignty of the people. They govern themselves according to the same principles. The affinities of their laws enable them in all things to understand one another without effort. . . . If repetition creates Truth, as Machiavelli says it creates Right, here assuredly is a truth of the staunchest. No theme has been more everlastingly laboured. Once again, let us look at the facts.

An initial difference between the two democracies is only too plain: one has possessed from the beginning rights which the other won but tardily and by violence. The history of France is not only one long battle for security. It is also one long battle for civil and political liberty. In the beginning was the god of central power. From that central power the people wrested what rights they have. The American of 1787 found in his cradle rights which the Frenchman of 1789 had to wrench from the Bastilles of privilege. Hector Saint-John de Crèvecœur, a French colonist in New England, congratulated himself in the eighteenth century that no despotic power disputed the crops with their lawful owner. France, on the contrary, had seen the land and its lordship main-

tained by hereditary right in the hands of a small number of families which controlled all real property and political power. The speeches of Philippe Pot, which date back to 1483, are said to contain the germ of all our theories on the sovereignty of the people. Before that sovereignty became a fact, what bloodshed!

In other terms, the Americans in their new land made a saving of some eighteen centuries. A saving of effort, but of experience also, that was not vouchsafed to France. When they landed from the Mayflower, the Pilgrims brought with them the jury, the *habeas corpus*, and many other liberties which to their French contemporaries were but dim and distant aspirations, if indeed they discerned them at all. Americans determined that their political life should be organized on the basis of a contract between equals, which would have found scant favour with Louis XIV. When their sons declared their independence of the mother country, it was they who, in State and Federal Constitutions, fixed the powers of the central government in place of praying for their rights. They never knew that close French blood-tie of Revolution and Liberty. Having neither insults to avenge nor bonds to sever, they created their own laws, tracing the domain of the executive within their own domain. It was the individual who set up the government, not the government which recognized the individual. The movement of public life instead of proceeding, as in France, from the centre to the periphery, went from the periphery to the centre. The Frenchman was obliged to conquer. The

American had only to preserve. The distinction created contrary political habits.

Sovereign, not by right of conquest, but by right of birth, the American has more completely secured his rights than the Frenchman, and this also proceeds from the origin of those rights. Our people of France, obliged to wrest their liberties by force from kings and nobles, easily persuaded themselves that once kings and nobles swept away, their liberties were free from further risk:

> 'Le Peuple souverain s'avance!
> Tyrans, descendez au cercueil!'

The ghost of tyranny thus laid by Rouget de Lisle's hymn, the victors went home rejoicing that they had achieved their hearts' desire, went home believing the problem solved. They gave no thought to the other danger. They had yet to learn from Edmund Burke that 'in a democracy the majority of citizens can exercise the most unbearable oppression on the minority, worse even than the tyranny of a single master.' They failed to see that, having merged the sovereign and the subject in the person of the citizen, they had set up a myriad-headed power in the place of authority with a single head. They failed to see that henceforth they were to be ground by the tyranny of numbers instead of as before by the tyranny of a monarch. And for a whole century they refrained from even the most elementary precautions against this new tyranny.

Against it, from the very outset, Americans, less emotional and more practical, took the most elabo-

rate precautions. The optimism of Rousseau and the doctrine of natural goodness were alike repugnant to them, so they fortified individual right against the power of numbers with a perfection of mistrust worthy of Hobbes. They carried it to the point of paralyzing the Executive, to the point of denying to the central Government the power to prevent abuses of power. We have seen Americans preferring liberty to nationality. We shall see them preferring liberty to authority, goading Lincoln to exclaim, 'Must there be some element of weakness in the nature of all republics? Must the Government of necessity be too strong to care for the liberties of individuals, or too weak to maintain itself?' Having to choose, France sacrificed the individual. The United States has refused to.

To protect the person, it has multiplied legal provisions unknown to French law. Not only has it adjusted the balance so nicely as to hamper the efficiency of all three powers — the executive, the legislative, and the judicial; but it has promulgated a special and privileged law, called the Constitution, to secure the rights of the individual against encroachment by legislatures, whether State or Federal. In France all laws are equal in power and absolute in effect. As soon as a bill has been passed by the two Chambers, it becomes law; and one law is as good as another. Its sovereignty is absolute if enacted in due form. Law, because the law, has absolute power, without restriction or reservation, over individuals: it can strip them of their wealth; deprive them of their rights; aye, even forfeit their lives. In America, on the contrary, legislative power stops on the threshold

of civil liberty; it breaks against the rampart of the Constitution, raised in the beginning. In opposition to our French laws, American laws are neither equal in power, nor absolute in effect. The Constitution is supreme.

Thus legislative enactment — that is, the will of the majority — constantly gives rise to questions of competence and to constitutional issues of which we know nothing. American legislatures pass what laws they please, but if the rights of the humblest citizen are infringed thereby, he can appeal to the district or circuit courts, to the federal courts of appeal, to the Supreme Court of the United States. The Supreme Court thus differs entirely from what too many Frenchmen — who want one — believe it to be: a unique and self-governing body, the absolute master of all laws. The Supreme Court is at once the court of last resort in all cases of Federal law, and the highest degree of constitutional jurisdiction, made necessary by the multiplicity and inequality of the laws. The Supreme Court is not the supreme lawmaker; it merely applies the law in the light of the supremacy of the Constitution. The Supreme Court is only the hierarchical consequence of the Constitution, coexisting with other laws; the powers of the legislatures being, according to Marshall, carefully defined and limited: the 'Constitution is written so that those limits may neither be confused nor forgotten.' We have nothing of the kind in France.

Hence, a second and important difference. France is a democracy which protects the individual only against personal power. The United States is a demo-

cracy which also protects the individual against the power of numbers, no less against democratic tyranny than against monarchical tyranny. Whether the executive power be of divine or human origin, Americans have for it none of that respectful confidence which all Frenchmen instinctively feel. In France the whole history of the country has been built up around the State and by it. For centuries the King was the fountain-head of justice, the rallying-point of the nation, the partner of God, just like the Emperor. The State was counted on and counted with, in every act of public and private life. Even now in every hamlet the State is present in the guise of schoolmaster, gendarme, postman, tax-collector, surveyor: all appointed by Paris; all paid by Paris. The Minister of the Interior is the guardian of the communes, and under the Code Napoléon, a guardian has full paternal powers over his charges. From the intendants of Louis XIV, through the prefects of the Empire, to those of the Third Republic, the chain is unbroken.

The result is two essentially different political worlds. Far from considering the central Government as a watchful providence to look after him, the American tinges with distrust what little thought he gives it. Up to quite recent times, the American could live in his home town without having anything to do either with the central Government or its representatives, the post-office excepted. Missouri takes little interest in what goes on in Washington, D.C. The 'Congressional Record' has fewer readers than our 'Journal Officiel.' What is asked of the Federal

Government? To assure equality of opportunity and to protect the proceeds of individual effort: a negative rather than a positive duty. The Federal Government is not necessarily indispensable, unless in exceptional cases, to the prosperity of the people. The Federal Government is not looked to for decorations and diplomas. The Federal Government would not be allowed, as in France, to interfere in birth and in death. People make their wills as they please. Centralized authority is the exception, not the rule. So long as it maintains a decent place to live in, no more is asked of it.

Our provinces have retained far more physical and moral personality than the forty-eight astronomically delimited States of North America. But of political independence our provinces had none, neither have their heirs: the departments. On the contrary, the forty-eight States possess administrative vigour unknown to French local life. Thirteen of them, from 1776 to 1781, were totally independent. The thirty-five others joined the Union as free republics with their own written constitutions. Each of them has its own charter, its executive, its legislature, its administration, its debts, its statehood, its courts, its laws. Some are larger than France; others more thickly populated than two thirds of the countries of Europe. Nothing in common with the abstract administration of our departments and the travesty of control over their assemblies. Even the State Government is not the principal centre of local life. The city is even closer to the citizen. Its street, police, charity, and school departments fulfil many of the functions

which fall to the central Government in France. French history is one long effort at centralization; American history at decentralization. If such antagonistic formations were to produce similar results, what would become of the law of cause and effect?

Law and authority are at the opposite pole to the French; — so are the well-springs of power. For one hundred and fifty years, we French have devoted the best of our political efforts to changing our institutions. Since the United States has existed, France, if I count aright, has lived under fourteen different régimes: absolute monarchy, the Constituent, the Legislative Government, the Convention, the Directorate, the Consulate, the Empire, the first Restoration, the Hundred Days, the Constitutional Monarchy, the Reformed Monarchy, the Republic, the Second Empire, the Third Republic — an average of five years for each régime. The United States during this time has had only one, which still endures. Our present régime, which has lasted for fifty years, is challenged every morning by three parties: the Royalist, the Socialist and the Communist. The American régime is challenged by none. Except during the last half-century, the French have persistently sought change. Americans have given it no thought. We are in many ways as much the slaves of tradition as they are; but we are also born revolutionaries, even though we carefully cling to the framework of the régimes we destroy.

What does this mean, if not that Americans are more conservative than the French? We built barricades, beheaded a king, set up the Commune of 1871,

bent each time on rebuilding the house from cellar to garret. In America, even revolutions are conservative! Conservatives, those Boston merchants who drove out the English, not in the heat of political or class passion, so natural to us, but to preserve fiscal conditions necessary to their business prosperity. Conservatives, those Virginia planters who fought not to force their interpretation of the Constitution upon the rest of the Union, but to defend the common right of each partner to withdraw from the Union. In the midst of political strife, in times of social-upheaval, Americans respect their institutions, which none seek to destroy. The right of amendment amply satisfies the yearning for innovation, and nothing but praise is heard of the Constitution itself. How different from France!

Something else again: respectful of institutions, Americans carefully avoid bringing religion into politics, while in France the two are inseparable. Some peculiar kink in our Latin mind makes it impossible for us to separate politics from religion. Rome, so tolerant of the polytheism of its subjects, withdrew the statue of Jesus from the Temple of Agrippa and persecuted the Christians, as soon as they began to claim monopoly of truth for their God. Later the Empire, after the Council of Nicea, attempted to bolster up its tottering universality with the universality of the Catholic Church. And ever since we Latins have sought in vain to separate the two. This perpetual imbrication has furnished paradoxes not a few. A successor of Saint Peter chastised by order of a descendant of Saint Louis; a conquering

soldier crowned by the Pope, in the name of Divine Right. What is worse, it has furnished centuries of religious wars, the Ligue, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the civil constitution of the clergy, the Concordat, the so-called 'Lay Laws,' the Law of Separation, quarrels which, now all ties are parted, survive their object because every one stakes something on both. This aspect of French politics is a closed book to Americans. It does more than anything else to discourage their affection.

How could they understand, never having lived the life from which this instinct springs? Although issuing from the Puritan theocracy of Massachusetts which was a State religion because only its members could vote, Americans from the very first placed the barrier of common law between the Churches and the State. Never, from that day to this, has civil power stretched forth the arm of unbending authority over religion, no matter what the creed. Never, from that day to this, has Religion raised its voice or hand against established institutions. Politico-religious movements, like the Know-Nothing, have invariably failed. No special legislation, no privileges, no exceptions, no bargaining with the churches. One law, the law of association. It passes the understanding of Frenchmen! A moment ago it was Americans who could not understand our religious controversies. Now it is we who cannot understand their religious peace. That religion should not set citizens by the ears is something no Frenchman can conceive.

Still less can we conceive religion that unites. Still less can we conceive that in the absence of a State

religion all creeds should lead their congregations to the support of the State: yet such is the case in the United States. Even more astounding this: the various creeds preferring social action to dogmatic disputes, have actually perfected, to the great advantage of America, a sort of evangelic coöperation which aspires to creating happiness in this world, not only in the next. Protestants have set the example: inspired, perhaps, by John Robinson, the pastor of the Church of Leyden from which issued the Church of Plymouth, who urged his flock 'to walk with all men for the common labours of mankind.' Methodism, Unitarianism, Transcendentalism, have all followed suit. And then a day came when a Catholic, like Brownson, preaching Americanism, adapted the uncompromising rigidity of the Church of Rome to this new tendency. Parliament of religions, congress of liberal creeds, where each year Protestants, Jews, Deists, Catholics, meet for human welfare and common action in the spirit of Roosevelt's words, 'We must have religions for all kinds of men'! France — where 'Dogma triumphant' has always been the slogan of Religion — may measure by this the chasm which separates her from the religious peace America enjoys.

No struggles centering round a régime, no struggles centering around religion, what inspiration is left for political life? Something in which France has rarely taken a supreme interest: economic welfare. Do not misunderstand me. I do not underestimate Marxism, and I know the part that economic factors have played in the history of France. But I say that, on the whole, France's history has not been moulded

thereby. The French State, welder of national unity, was of necessity a political and military organ. The great dates of our revolution are political and military dates. Not so in American history. The invention of steam and of electricity had a thousand times more effect in the United States than in France. The whole history of the New World, from Columbus to the blossoming of the West, is economic. No similar curve exists in that of France.

This is worthy of thought. At the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth, France was inspired by two contradictory and successive ideals: the ideal of equality and the ideal of authority — mainsprings of the execution of Louis XVI and of the power of Napoleon. At the same period what inspired North America? Economic necessity. The revolution of 1776 was of fiscal origin. If England had not prohibited the trade in molasses and killed by industrial monopoly the ship chandleries and distilleries of New York, if even she had but tolerated smuggling, there would have been no revolution. The Constitution itself was as much an economic as a political compromise, between business and agriculture, between capital and labour; a compromise cluttered up with customs clauses. Then two great party struggles: the consolidation of debts and the national bank. Then two wars of purely commercial origin: one with France in 1796, one with England in 1812. Finally a fifty-year civil duel of fundamental economic character. It is clear in the matter of tariffs; in the matter of slavery, proof is easy.

That struggle, the most dramatic of American history, began after the brilliant period during which France, for a quarter of a century, made law according to Rousseau and fought according to Charlemagne. Whence did it arise! From anti-slavery campaigns — as so many Frenchmen believe, to whom Mrs. Beecher Stowe is more familiar than Lincoln? No. It arose out of one of the innumerable incidents which marked the opening-up of the West. Anti-slavery campaigns came later, and with all due respect to the sincerity of the abolitionists, their efforts must be considered not as a cause, but as an effect.

Since 1820, slavery had been maintained by compromise. The Treaty of 1848 with Mexico had instituted slavery in Texas where it did not previously exist. Abraham Lincoln at the beginning of the Civil War had no thought of abolishing slavery. Nothing here in common with French political dogmatism — abolitionist with Schoelcher, as it was '*frontière naturelle*' under Louis-Philippe or '*nationalité*' under Napoleon the Third. The conflict which for so many years was to threaten the unity of the American Republic was no dogmatic dispute, no philosophical quarrel! The issue was economic, solely economic. How was the West to be developed?

Slavery in the West would have meant the shutting-out of white labour, which since 1815 had been constantly attracted there. The West free would have meant the shutting-out of the South, whose wealth equally with that of the North had contributed to its opening-up. The issue was the future of a territory, vested by the Ordinance of 1787 in the Federal

Union, for the development of which North and South proposed two irreconcilable systems. If the West, which both North and South needed, had not existed, the South would have kept its slaves and the North, more anti-negro than the South, would have raised no objection. Lincoln himself admitted it. Once war had broken out, not for the freeing of the blacks but for the preservation of the Union, emancipation followed and even suffrage. But the two amendments were a consequence, not an aim. They were the capstone placed upon the whole, like the 'World Safe for Democracy' of Woodrow Wilson. All of which is as unlike as can be to France's spontaneous and immediate liberation of the slaves by the decree which annexed Madagascar.

Do not imagine, however, that this titanic crisis exhausted the supremacy of economics in American politics. Free silver provided the next issue. The West, poor, in debt, thirsting for credit, demanded the right to mint its silver dollars and, on behalf of Western farmers and Western mine owners, started a Democratic crusade against the plutocrats of the East, on a platform of free silver. In turn railroads became the issue, under McKinley and Roosevelt, when the producer, alarmed by the power of the railroads, to which he owed his prosperity, but which could ruin him by rebates, denounced the control of legislatures by money and demanded a political clean-up. Then trusts became the issue, under Roosevelt and Taft, when the consumer, feeling the pinch of prices which had escaped the natural law of supply and demand, called upon the Federal Government for

help and demanded regulation by public authority. For full fifty years American politics revolved around these issues. They dictated nominations for the Presidency, changes in the laws, even amendments of the Constitution. In France, during the same time, the war of 1870, the Commune, the 16th of May, the public education issue, General Boulanger, the Dreyfus affair, the Russian alliance, the Western ententes. Once again, dissimilarity of preoccupations is self-evident.

Throughout these struggles, American party organization remained unchanging and permanent. I have recorded fourteen changes of régime in France in less than one hundred years. If I were to enumerate the parties which created, controlled, or destroyed those fourteen régimes, the count would run into hundreds. In our Chambers the group — poor parent of the party — a parliamentary formation having no counterpart in the electorate, has become the unit of measure. The combinations to which it lends itself are so numerous and so arbitrary that in 1921 and 1925 we had the same Prime Minister come into power with two opposing majorities. Can American readers imagine Woodrow Wilson being elected in 1916 by the Democrats and in 1920 by the Republicans? In contradistinction with the flying dust of our political organizations, the United States has only two great parties which, under different names, have always existed and are so firmly rooted that men as popular as Theodore Roosevelt have failed to break them up by the creation of a third party. As old as the Constitution, they are almost equally venerated.

To Frenchmen who, in their own two Chambers, see groups changing from one legislature to another and sometimes from one session to another, these two great parties, which have endured for nearly one hundred and fifty years and are still full of strength, seem to emerge from some lost world. Frenchmen can no more understand their vitality and length of life than they can the reason for their existence, which grew out of two tendencies, personified in former days by Hamilton and Jefferson, both totally unknown to us. It is true that with the lapse of time those tendencies have become blurred, and the initial differences find less expression in present-day problems. The great issues round which the battles of the past were fought, free silver, the railroads, the trusts, civil service, the Philippines, etc., are exhausted. To draft opposing platforms, brains must needs be cudgelled. When an issue is found, such as the Treaty of Versailles, it is pounced upon. As a rule the tariff has to serve. On all essentials the two parties are in substantial agreement; and as members of the American Federation of Labour are pretty well divided between them, there is not even the resource of socialist congresses to stir up dogmatic strife. If a popular movement manifests itself in the country, Republicans and Democrats seize upon it, flatter it, and struggle to get on the band wagon. Such fundamental unity is not the lot of France.

The American régime has vices which are by no means hidden. The two parties, more powerful than ever as political machines despite the exhaustion of their programmes, are as keen as ever about elections

to strengthen their prestige. They divide political jobs like spoils, enslave the citizen to the machine, seek vote-getting candidates rather than able executives, stoop to graft which would be impossible in France and of which the Republican U.G.I. in Philadelphia and Democratic Tammany in New York are shining exponents. If I compare, it is to explain and not to criticize. I merely emphasize the evident contradictions between French political activity and American political activity. No Frenchman would ever allow himself to be imprisoned from birth in one of the huge political organizations within which generations of Americans have abided since 1787, as they have abided in the Constitution. Two fine bottles with different labels, a humourist has said, but the bottles are empty. But empty though they be, they play their part. They play it with the consent and coöperation of more than a hundred million people who are content therewith, just as their great ancestors were content to contrast, in naïve and symbolic prints, the six-horse carriage of George Washington and the nag which Thomas Jefferson used to tie to the Senate railing.

Sister Democracies, both equally Republics — as the parrot-like exponents of the alleged identity of French and American institutions keep on repeating. We have just seen that everything except the label is different: the formation of civil liberty; the definition of the rights of the individual; his protection against the tyranny of numbers; the citizen's attitude towards the régime and towards religion; the relative importance of economic and political factors; the organiza-

tion of parties; the position of the citizen. If we rely on alleged identity for ease of mutual understanding, surely we rely in vain!

IV

Two Temperaments

Within these dissimilar spheres, national and political, individuals move, society evolves. Here also the rhythms are discordant, the tendencies contradictory.

In the first place, individualism, on which both countries pride themselves, follows opposite laws in each. American individualism is much more social than French individualism. In the United States the individual seeks company. In France the individual seeks isolation. The American sings with Emerson a hymn which a Frenchman might think written for him about 'the sacred nature of human personality.' But he conceives the perfection of personality only in collective harmony, and this is the distinctive trait of his idealism. As far removed from the anarchism of Rousseau as from the egoism of Nietzsche, the American hates solitude as much as we hate association. A 'meeting-going animal' he was called in the seventeenth century, and although that applied then only to his religious life, it is applicable now to all his activities. From the time he cuts his eye-teeth, he belongs to a club. As a student, he joins a fraternity. He feels the need of contact with other people. The words he loves: good feeling, good will, coöperation, are all words expressing combined effort. A Frenchman is only happy when working alone. He scarcely tolerates the eye of the State in his affairs, never that of his neighbour. The American seeks association; the

Frenchman loathes it. The former is bubbling over with public spirit, of which the latter has none.

A first result: the love of compromise. To unite — 'unite instead of separate,' as Josiah Royce said — one must compromise. The American is taught to compromise in school, in church, in business. His political history, as we have seen, is one long series of compromises; just the opposite to French history, which is one long series of refusals to compromise. Individuals follow the example of the Nation. While a Frenchman is only at ease in the absolute, the American accommodates contraries. He prefers synthesis which combines, to analysis which divides. And this is true politically, socially, and intellectually.

Theodore Roosevelt and Daniel Webster both thought that an ideal Constitution would be a fusion of the Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian systems. A great captain of industry, like John D. Rockefeller; a great labour leader, like Samuel Gompers, late President of the American Federation of Labour, meet to discuss how capital and labour can best co-operate. The pragmatism of William James is a philosophy of compromise. Emerson was content with the imperfections of the Republic — a raft on which one's feet are always wet, but on which one never drowns. Woodrow Wilson defines politics as 'the art of being human, an art of liberty and strength.' Every American accepts that definition. Who cannot see that had initial hardships been complicated by unyielding dogmatism, failure must have ensued? Action, that is the relative, conquered reason, the

absolute. Our Latin logic and the ease of our existence have driven us in the opposite direction.

The result is that the American, better protected than the Frenchman in his civil liberty and political rights, is less well armed against social conventions. Once outside the legal fortress of the Constitution and the Supreme Court, he puts up with anything. By a wave of his hand, a policeman stops twenty thousand people. A hundred and one petty tyrannies, which in France would lead to riot, are meekly borne: blue laws, all kinds of 'Don'ts,' at all times and places; prohibition, etc. The American submits to things that would exasperate a Frenchman. He likes to agree with the majority, which we love to defy. He thirsts for unanimity; has faith in the wisdom of nations; respects all established customs. From his school days he is the prisoner of countless axioms, which French boys would tear to pieces. He is taught to think like the rest. He is subjected to mass production of emotions. Gavroche sticks out his tongue at the bullet which lays him low. The American has nothing of the Fronde, nor any taste for uprisings such as, for centuries, prepared the way for our Revolution. He prefers to believe in the automatic accomplishment of national destiny and to allow it to absorb his own. He is a model of social discipline. Far more jealous of his political liberty than the instinctively plebiscite-loving Frenchman, he sacrifices without a qualm other liberties: those we value most. In this respect the two countries present inverse reactions.

If we seek the reason, we find it in the instinctive and utter optimism which takes for granted the un-

paralleled perfection of American civilization. American optimism is a natural force. Surprising, if one goes back to pioneer days; but conceivable, if the intervening hundred years are considered. Jonathan Edwards delivered the repentant sinner into the hands of an angry God. William James agrees that 'the God hypothesis' works fairly well. It is a far cry from the one to the other; but between them there is first the rough life of the West, which could not have been lived without optimism; then refreshing stages, the smiling utilitarianism of Poor Richard, the uplift of Channing and Emerson towards the inner light; inspiration; self-reliance. In the forest ringing with human endeavour, who could refuse to believe in effort? We, who for two thousand years have dwelt in the same place and followed familiar paths, have difficulty in grasping such faith. But to the squatters and farmers it was a prime necessity. Here, the difference of national formation explains ethical differences.

This optimism has made the United States what it is; but because it is what it is, its optimism has increased a thousand-fold. At first cause, it became effect. In the light of such prodigious success how could doubt creep into the soul of man? This continent is the only one where no man submits to Dante's 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here.' Hope is the most precious asset of the immigrant. When Moses read the law to the people of Israel, he showed them the promised land. Here indeed is a promised land, unfolding its irresistible attraction from one ocean to the other. This is no Old-World land, where oppor-

tunities are fewer than men; where social barriers limit man's effort; where specialization, permanence of location, and continuity of calling, crystallize human lives. In the United States every one knows that nothing is ever final for any one; every one knows that to-morrow the poor may be rich, the tenant a landlord, the workman an employer. 'We owe our wealth to the great army of the ragged.' This saying of Woodrow Wilson shows the gulf that separates the Old World from the New. The United States has its disinherited, as has Europe, but they do not carry that tragic cross — no hope of better days.

James Bryce has most vividly described this feeling of unlimited potentiality, present in American life, lacking in French life: potentiality of material comfort and moral consolation within a boundless land where every one can make his way; where arable land in marvellous abundance awaits the new arrival; where the soil bears every product of the temperate zone and many of the semi-tropical; where the subsoil vies with the surface in wealth; where the home market offers the producer an almost infinite capacity of absorption; where the effect of the worst financial crisis is wiped out in a few months; where opportunity, sung by Emerson, rises at each step, as birds rise from the stubble in the early morn before the sportsman. It is not chance which has sown optimism in these thousands of hearts; it is Nature, a prodigal Nature unknown on this side of the Atlantic, which has transfigured the modern crusaders who left the shores of poverty. Its lasting impress is on individual character.

Because Americans are optimistic, they are better

equipped than the French for the battle of life. But the price of this advantage is a source of weakness, a diseased pride. At every page of their history crops up a childish belief that Americans are the chosen people. 'God has sifted his people to choose the good grain that will grow in the wilderness'; this initial definition by one of the pilgrims of the Mayflower echoes down the years. 'We shall be a model to the world,' boasted George Washington. Jefferson hailed 'this nation of men, equal by their talents and their merit.' Even the aristocratic Hamilton condescended to recognize that his people — which at times he calls silly fools — are destined to decide the important question, 'whether societies are capable or not of establishing a good government from reflection and choice.' Fifty years pass and here is Emerson: 'America ought to be the lawmaker of nations . . . the moral development of man, as such, is bound up with the development of Americans,' and Walt Whitman's 'America, the land of glory.' Our contemporaries are no less boastful. McKinley: 'America has the best government that ever existed'; Woodrow Wilson: 'American life is a prophetic type of humanity'; Warren G. Harding: 'In a century and a half America has done more for human progress than all the nations of the world in all history.' What hyperbolical self-praise! It leaves Frenchmen, who are not accustomed to spare one another, dumbfounded.

Americans are in no way ashamed of it; for their pride is without limit. Is not their country the only one in which democratic institutions have worked for a hundred and fifty years without a hitch? The only

one which in the same length of time has transformed a small colony of 4,000,000 inhabitants into a mighty nation of more than 100,000,000 souls? Can any one question the excellence of a régime crowned by such achievement? Is it not clear that a century of American history is an abridgement of ten centuries of human history; that the great men of America are the incarnation of all human achievements: George Washington, liberty; Jackson, authority; Abraham Lincoln, union; McKinley, wealth; Roosevelt, power; Woodrow Wilson, democracy? How can these millions of immigrants, come from afar to seek a better life, cover themselves with the shame of doubt, when before their very eyes this magnificent achievement rises to the skies? The American citizen, as powerful as the citizen of Athens, more powerful than the citizen of Rome, more powerful even than his elected representatives, since he alone can change the limitations the Constitution imposes upon them, is unspeakably proud of his individual as well as of his collective might.

Is it necessary to add that this state of mind does not make understanding any easier? Convinced that he always stands for wisdom against folly, and for virtue against vice, the American takes little pains to penetrate the meaning of things he does not understand. He is impatient of all contradiction. He wants results, now or not at all. He prefers rapidity of execution to perfection of finish. He condemns whatever is unfamiliar to him. In his passion for constructive effort, he pays no heed to objections. He disdains precedent, at the risk of relapsing into error.

He believes only in his own experience. He decides the affairs of others, peremptorily and without regard for their feelings. He carries into discussions an itch for prophecy which our old country has long since learned to discard and which irritates our logical mind. Such, the counterpart of magnificent virtues.

The underlying cause of these opposite reflexes is the antagonism of two civilizations. The one — ours — is daughter of pagan antiquity; the other, daughter of the Reformation. The one, descended from Greece and Rome; the other, from the Bible. The Bible is the vigorous trunk from which spread the boughs of the American oak. In its shade arrivals of immigrants have lain down to rest; so much so that even Catholic immigrants — the wall of dogma notwithstanding — have soon felt themselves more in sympathy with Protestant fellow Americans than with European fellow Catholics. Reformation, a reaction against the mating of pagan culture and Roman hierarchy which under Julius II and Leo X was the soul of the Renaissance! Reformation, a challenge to the life-springs of French genius; to the treasure-store of ideals, of feelings, of emotions handed down to us from antiquity — that priceless heritage saved from barbarian hordes by studious monasteries. The years have passed. The challenge has remained. Whatever adds grace to our lives is suspect to the American conscience.

When Luther and Calvin, in the name of personal judgment and restored discipline, cut Christendom asunder, there arose two beliefs which, unable to destroy each other by violence, have remained face to face like two repellent poles. We French represent

two traditions, the ancient and the Catholic, which Protestant Anglo-Saxons most distrust. We have not progressed beyond the doctrine of Plato. Ideal man is to our mind the standard of value. We measure the progress of the individual, not by material achievements, but by his intrinsic worth. Whether in matters of faith or of reason, we are classics. Rationalists in the seventeenth century, critics in the eighteenth, poets in the nineteenth, we place the subjective development of self above all else. From Descartes' stove to the Parnassian tower of ivory, disinterested culture, making man the ultimate aim of man, has been held by our élite to be the highest form of human endeavour.

Not at all so with Americans; first because they were not able, then because they did not desire. I say they were not able, and of this there is abundant proof. The circumstances of their origin did not lend themselves to intellectual life. Many among them dreaded it. Alexander Hamilton looked upon our philosophers as poisoners of the human mind. Fisher Ames thought the formation of an American literature modelled on ours would be a danger. 'I hope,' said John Adams, 'that the age of sculpture will not arrive very soon. I would not give sixpence for a statue of Phidias or a picture of Raphael.' Such being the opinion of New England, one could hardly expect the squatter, ever seeking to overcome material obstacles, to combat it! The English, who pitilessly denounced the poverty of American thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century, were lacking in measure and justice. 'Who reads American books,'

asked Sidney Smith; 'who goes to see American plays?' It is true that North America in the first third of its history contributed but little to the progress of thought. How could she? She was creating life, and sufficient to the day was the effort thereof.

I also said that America did not desire to acquire the spirit of our culture, and this must not be forgotten. What was America's first contribution to metaphysical speculation? The staunchest repudiation of the essential characteristic of French thought. The determination to make American thought, not the servant of individual progress, but the agent of social progress. When Emerson proclaimed, 'We are done with our apprenticeship,' it meant first that the time was passed when American publications printed only English essays; when James Fenimore Cooper apologized, in the preface of 'The Spy,' for having dared to select an American subject. But it meant also the birth of a speculative activity which was to oppose itself to European subjectivism. Nothing of the proud detachment which characterizes our authors. The mind directed towards action. As we have just seen economics overriding politics, so we are to see social tendencies overriding intellectual preoccupations. Just as Religion becomes a national asset, so is Thought to become a social asset. In one case as in the other, collective progress is the aim.

Colonial moralists, religious and secular, Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin, had set the example. Unitarians and transcendentalists accentuated this tendency. Emerson, Alcott, Fuller, Thoreau, Longfellow saturated American literature with

public spirit. Emerson asserted in every line that action was the object of his metaphysics. Each of these authors incarnated a phase of American history, Cooper, the frontier won from the Indian; Whitman, the union preserved; Beecher Stowe, the slave freed; William James, endeavour as a doctrine. When one prided himself upon 'expressing the modern'; when the other wrote, 'the ardent energies at work in New York and Chicago to cover the world with means of communication and link up peoples in a community of thought, are the manifestations of the same eternally young forces which made Italian art, the poetry of the Middle Ages and the beauty of ancient civilizations,' all agreed that art was subordinate to life. Edgar Allan Poe alone — we know at what cost — was in sympathy with the Latin ideal of art for art's sake. Our impassibility appeared to Americans as vain-glorious or criminal.

I neither judge nor criticize; I seek to understand; and I say that things being as they are, communion between our two countries is difficult to establish. I know full well the immense effort America has made for the intellectual formation of its constantly changing population. I know that, as soon as the village was settled, the colonists demanded books. I know that, as early as 1787, Congress by liberal grants of land endowed schools and universities. I know that the United States established public education before France, and that Horace Mann preceded Jules Ferry. I know the prosperity of their six hundred universities; the profusion of their chairs, of their laboratories, of their libraries, far better stocked than

ours. And I should have bad grace to forget it, I who had my first contact with America in the ancient precincts of Harvard. But I do say that this splendid equipment is far removed in character and tendency from our ordinary field of vision. I say that American education, like American art, like American literature, like American philosophy, aims not at the perfection of man, but at the development of the Nation. I do say that, in its very essence, it is social and not individual.

This is because American culture, like American politics, has tasks unknown to ours. In the first place, it is asked to do what religion is asked to do: to absorb and to digest. Then it has a national mission, to unite instead of to divide. It must produce executives and men of action to develop the vast territory of the United States. It is true that in some few universities one finds seminaries of pure learning equal or even superior to those of Europe in the absolute disinterestedness of their speculative researches. But this is the exception. Taken as a whole, the aim of education is to form professional men, farmers, engineers; and to form them numerous rather than eminent. To turn out by mass production the cadres of the army of labour. Curriculums and lectures are essentially practical. Effort is directed towards the welfare of the country rather than towards personal culture. Emerson is a reference; Edison is a model.

In short, the two orientations are so utterly different that they are inassimilable. In the very domain where French effort is denationalized by its own object, American effort is consecrated to the service of

public interest. The American demands that his universities turn out trained men necessary to his progress. He is perfectly satisfied if the personal development of the individual attains to the level where he is most profitable to the community. The saying of Horace Greeley which has caused many a smile, 'We must have a literature which makes common cause with the aspirations of the farmer, mechanic and worker,' is fuller of meaning than appears at first sight. The collective aim dominates and oppresses the individual. Education itself is the slave of social interest. Human personality is esteemed only in proportion to the services rendered to society. The hierarchy of values is essentially different from what it is in France. We do not think alike. The axes around which we revolve are not pointed in the same direction.

In the year XIII of the Republic (1805) a Frenchman, Perrin du Lac, published a book in Paris, 'Voyage dans les deux Louisianes et chez les nations sauvages du Missouri.' From pleasing descriptions and somewhat far-fetched conclusions I cull this sentence in which the author candidly says what he thinks: 'The guiding principle of Americans seems to be never to do anything as we do.'

Must I confess that I prefer this plain admission to any amount of the conventional oratory which has accustomed us to sloth by concealing the truth? Divided by so many contrasts, our two people can neither understand, appreciate, nor complete one another unless they are told what separates them and

are guided towards reasoned coöperation. Hereafter is told the story of such a combined effort, in all its many aspects. If success is possible, the renewal of error would be damnable. Perrin du Lac was right. Instinct forbids Americans and Frenchmen to do anything in the same way. The real worth of method is that it disciplines instinct. May it be permitted to offer the two countries their 'Discourse of Method'?

CHAPTER II

TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF FRENCH LIFE

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I

Endure and Suffer

From 1917 to 1918, the United States and France waged war shoulder to shoulder. From 1917 to 1924, on two hundred thousand acres of French soil, the United States and France undertook, developed, and maintained a social work for which no precedent existed. This effort was made on land drenched with the blood of the associated armies, around Soissons and Laon, in the most essentially French corner of France, the most charged with history, the most saturated with tradition, hence the least accessible to American understanding. Let us apply the test of hard facts to our analysis of contrasts by viewing this land and its life in the light of geography and history.

We are between the Oise and the Aisne, where converge the highways which, from east and north, lead to Paris. Here three provinces meet: Ile de France, Picardy, Champagne. North and south, the two rivers have pierced deep gaps running east and west. In between, their affluents have worn valleys perpendicular to their beds. Meeting in this triangle, the mother provinces have given birth to two 'pays' whose personality centering round Laon and Soissons has resisted the influence of their surroundings. Physical personality first, so different from the general aspect of the great provincial masses of Picardy, Ile

de France, and Champagne. Moral personality, also — the outgrowth of a series of events unparalleled in the annals of France.

Geology furnishes the basis of these characteristics. The region of Laon and Soissons, surrounded by an immense chalk formation, is a zone of transition in which the chalk, going down deep, is separated from the soil by calcareous masses cut up by waterways into good-sized plateaus. Contour, vegetation, hydrography, colour are all affected. Here and there outcroppings of lime; and from the sand and the sandstone a thick growth of hornbeam, ash, and birch arises. It used to be known as the Forest of Voas, but man having eaten into the woodland, it is now the forest of Coucy, forest of Saint-Gobin, forest d'Ourscamp, wood of Thiescourt, wood of la Cave, wood of Bouvresse, wood of Besme, forest of Compiègne. Here and there sand and sandstone give way to that rich loam which spreads over the black lands of Russia and across northern Germany, expands to the Belgian Campine, and triumphs in Picardy.

There it is the favourite soil of culture. On these plateaus, protected by their altitude against floods and by the nature of their soil against the forests, French agriculture was born. The view is as endless as the furrows. There the earliest plough knew no obstacle. For twenty centuries or thereabouts the Soissonnais and Laonnois have produced rye and barley and wheat and beets. The tableland laughs with rich harvests, yet the people live but poorly. Water is at an average depth of two hundred and fifty feet. The names of the villages which have ventured

there, Chavigny-le-Sec, Berzy-le-Sec, bear witness to this drawback. We are in the land of wheat. Thanks to the strength of its roots, the ear supports drought which puts man to flight. On this tableland, men plough and sow and reap; with rare exceptions, they do not dwell.

The populated area is in the neighbourhood of the water which filters through the hillsides and runs in the valleys. So the villages encircle the plateau along a line traced by streams, which are at times overfed by the oozing clayey slopes. South of Laon, as around Anizy and Vauxaillon, lie marshes. In strong contrast to the barren greyness of the heights, this dampness favours a magnificent vegetation: trees, grasses, orchards, pastures. The sun aiding, a great diversity of cultivation brightens the hillsides. The Laonnois had its vineyards, the Soissonnais its market gardens, which surrounded with greenery the villages huddled halfway up the hillsides or lying in the valleys.

For more than two thousand years men have lived on this land in the same spots. The antiquity and continuity of human society — the privilege and burden of France — are here imperatively made manifest. Nowhere did geographic personality assert itself earlier or more clearly. First the underground burrows of Gaul. Laon was originally a cave city. Proper names, the witnesses, says Liebnitz, of bygone civilizations, tell this hidden history in the valleys of the Oise and the Aisne. Creuttes, Crouttes, Crouy, Craonne, are its interpreters. Pommiers, Saint-Thomas, Pasly, Morsain with its *Pierre Trouée*, Vauxrezis with its *Pierre Noble*, Billy-sur-Aisne with

its *Pierre qui tourne à minuit*, the wood of Pargny with its Druid remains, Pinon with its Celtic alleys, the tombs and coins unearthed in a hundred villages, all bear witness to a civilization already strong enough to reach out beyond its borders. Divitiac, King of the Suessons, was the first conqueror of England.

Rome appeared upon the scene! Thirty-eight roads cross and radiate from this region. Soissons, the military and administrative capital, was resplendent with Latin harmony. Open squares nobly planned, wide streets, houses which mingled their red tiles with the white stones of local quarries, the peristyles of the palaces, the splendour of the baths, of the amphitheatres, of the imperial establishments, of the armouries and mints and public granaries, all gave Augusta Suessonium the aspect of a metropolis in the days of the first Cæsars. Surrounding the city, rural villas and flourishing farms: forerunners of our modern villages. Vallisbona became Vauxbuin; Vallisserena, Valséry; Croviacum, Crouy; Muciacum, Missy; Codiciacum, Coucy; Luliacum, Leuilly; Cotiola, Coyolles; Cuiciacum in alto, Cuisy en Almont; Caricia-cum, Quierzy; Valliacum, Vailly. A Gallo-Roman official, Jovin, having built Juviniacum, Clovis won the battle of 486 there; it is now Juvigny.

At this early date, a social life whose features we can still trace took shape. The farm (*curtis*) grew into the village whose suffix denotes its origin; Blérancourt, Audignicourt, Bichancourt. If freemen gathered there, it became a *vicus*, and we have Vic-sur-Aisne. The agricultural unit found expression in the 'pays' (*pagus*) which grouped neighbouring

villages; trading units also, in towns (*civitates*) from which grew cities and provinces. From the third century on, moral unity, the work of the Church, was to superimpose itself upon the others by its parishes and dioceses. A century later, the region was definitely organized. Men tilled the soil; the hillside bore the villa of the master; around it lay fields and the forest. Later, castles, symbols of protection as of oppression, were substituted by the misfortune of the times for the shallow ditches which in Roman days sufficed to indicate ownership. Later again, the monarchy razed the castles. Nearer still to us the Revolution partitioned the national domain. Neither the aspect of the land nor the essential conditions of life underwent the slightest change.

Essentially local communities, in which for centuries men have lived, laboured, suffered, thought, prayed, hoped, and died, as did their ancestors. Two rallying-points: the Church and the Commune. We may rest assured that even in our days a contemporary of Louis le Gros would find himself at home there. The houses all look alike and have always looked alike. There are farms, some large, some small, but all built foursquare to the winds, a barn outside the living quarters facing the entrance, a garden roundabout. Stone is used, not rubble as in Picardy and Champagne, for stone is everywhere and has been employed from the tenth century with magnificent prodigality. Except at Laon and Soissons, these stone dwellings shelter only tillers of the soil. For all time the soil has been their sole 'raison d'être,' whether they tilled it as serfs, owned it as nobles, or were clerks who lived by

the transactions it entailed. The soil, the common bond of all, rustics and citizens. The soil, sole source of wealth and action. The soil, sacred gage of more than fifteen centuries of effort and suffering!

For this is the second characteristic: production first, then suffering. This land aspired but to grow grain. But because it is a highway, its grain has grown in gore. For two thousand years it has been raped by every invasion. From Clovis to Ludendorff, these fields have been trod by every conqueror, from north or east, who coveted the spoils of Paris. In days of turmoil, the Laonnois and the Soissonnais will ever be in the thick of the strife. For Laon and its hilltop, Saint-Gobain and its wooded *massif*, Coucy and its Chemin des Dames, are the bolts placed by Nature on the doors of the Oise, of the Aisne, of the Ailette, of Vauxaillon, and of Juvincourt, which bar the road to Paris. To force them, to seize the key to the heart of France, no sacrifices are too great. Because this land is where it is, because it is the threshold of Roman country facing Germanism, it was for twenty centuries to be a living frontier, predestined to martyrdom.

The narrow quadrangle formed by Laon, Chauny, Villers-Cotterets, and Soissons, less than one tenth the area of France, has been the scene since Cæsar of more than two hundred sieges and pitched battles, to which may be added minor engagements and chronic devastations of which History has lost all count. Laon has been besieged on forty-two occasions, eleven times in twenty-seven years, from 922 to 949; four times in ten years, from 981 to 991; five times

in seventeen years, from 1412 to 1429. Among its assailants, at times victors, at times vanquished, were Cymrics, Vandals, Huns, Franks, Burgunds, Normans, the Merovingian, Carolingian, Capetian kings, the chief officers of Neustria and Austrasia, the Dukes of France and the Dukes of Lorraine, the Plantagenets, the Bourbons, the Armagnacs, the Burgundians, the Imperialists, Napoleon, the Russians, the Prussians, the Austrians, the Germans. It is like some ancient cliff against which the waves beat everlastingly.

Let us go down to the arena in which Soissons lies. Thirty-two sieges and pitched battles have been fought there, and as frequently. Six in ninety-six years, from 883 to 979; eight in twenty-two years, from 1414 to 1436; four in seventy-three years, from 1521 to 1594; three in six weeks in 1814; two in five years, from 1914 to 1918. Among the leaders of the armies which clashed there were Divitiac, Cæsar, Clovis, Syagrius, Sigebert, Chilperic, Brunehaut, Frédégonde, Charles Martel, Charles the Simple, Hugues of France, Otho of Germany, Hugues Capet, Charles VI, Charles V, Henry IV, Condé, Turenne, Napoleon, Wintzingerode, Blücher, Bülow, Mortier, without mentioning those of the last war. That after each ruin the city should have arisen again; that always after the cannon, the plough should have returned: that is the eternal mystery of French history.

As fully as its two capitals, the country between the Aisne and the Oise has known the same tribulations. Sixty times great armies have clashed there. Chauny was captured by the King of France in 1215, by the

Duke of Burgundy in 1411, by the English in 1418, by the King of France again in 1430, by Maximilian of Austria in 1478, by Charles V in 1539, by the Spaniards in the next century. The plateau of Juvigny saw the victory of the Franks over the Romans. The Chemin des Dames has paid, how dearly History tells, for the strife between the Neustrians and the Austrasians, of which Trucy and on two occasions Laffaux were the battlefields. It witnessed the defeat of the Normans at Vailly; the supreme convulsions of Napoleon in 1814 at Craonne, Chavignon, and Vauclerc; the two battles of 1914, the two of 1917, the two of 1918. The farm of Hurtebise alone, and the tiny plot of land that surrounds it, have been taken, lost, retaken, and razed, seven times in a century. The stately walls of Coucy were stormed by the Duke of Orleans in 1411, by the King in 1412, by the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke of Orleans in 1419, by the English in 1423, by Mazarin in 1652. Mont-Notre-Dame was burnt by the Spaniards and by the Protestants.

For when foreign war was idle, civil war, religious war, and seditions came into their own. In 1178, the Bishop of Laon at Chailvet decimated his peasants who had revolted. With the aid of Thomas de Marle, Lord of Coucy, they took their revenge the following year. In the fourteenth century the Jacquerie razed more than a hundred castles in the Laonnois and Soissonnais. Then other bands: the Navarrais, flayers, outlaws, devils. After them Calvinism. Master of Chauny, it failed before Laon, but captured Soissons, which it sacked. Next the Ligue, and four more sieges

with as many battles. Later the Fronde and the Revolution brought their devastation. For the door that leads to Paris was battered by civil enemies as by foreign foes. Civil war or foreign war, the results were always the same. They are scored deep in local chronicles. We read that in the fourteenth century 'it is at Coucy and around Soissons, that the greatest ill-doers are met with.' In 1414, this latter city, taken by the King and his Armagnacs, 'is pillaged clean, and by no report did the Saracens ever do worse.' Each time churches were emptied, communal goods confiscated, public buildings thrown down. It was, says a contemporary, 'an abyss of horror and darkness, of profound ignominy.' When Charles V, in 1539, gave over the towns to pillage, but forbade rape and assassination, he was lauded for such unaccustomed mildness as a benefactor of humanity. After the wars of religion the misery was such that Henry II and Charles IX had to forego taxes from Soissons, which was unable to pay anything. The wars of the seventeenth century led to famine after famine. Those of the nineteenth, of shorter duration were more bloody. As soon as labour returned and prosperity showed signs of revival, the plague broke out again.

Thus, through the course of centuries, these provinces were continually butchered and forever recovering. The souls of the peaceful peasants have been tempered by fire and sword. They never give way. They always come back. The last war found them broken to the game. Like others, it passed over them without forcing them back a foot.

II

Faith

At this dread game of war the springs of life have here been strained almost to breaking point. The rise to preëminence of the four great forces — Church, Feudalism, Monarchy, Democracy — which have made the world what it is, can be traced in the swell of the stupendous struggles which gave birth to French unity. To follow the growth of these forces and study their conflicts, no better observation post exists. Let us test this truth by the first and for long the most active of these forces: Religion. Bear in mind that we are in the home of Saint Remi, who wedded the altar and the throne; in the home of Calvin, who defined the premises of the Reformation.

As early as the third century, the Church asserted itself as a political power in the Soissonnais and the Laonnois. Remi, Archbishop of Rheims, and his suffragan of Soissons restrained the barbaric hordes after the defeat of Syagrius on the plateau of Juvigny. On the *champ-de-mars* of Soissons — between the Aisne, the slopes of Crouy, and Bucy-le-Long — Clovis braved the anger of his followers and did obeisance to the Church. Here was tied the political knot which, by the marriage and conversion of the victor, prepared the fusion of races. Here were laid the foundations of ecclesiastical power which was to play so decisive a part in the history of men, of things, and of ideals.

'Take for thyself,' said Clovis, 'as much land as thou canst ride over while I sleep.'

So the Archbishop mounted his horse and during the royal nap galloped at breakneck speed around Coucy, Juvigny, Leuilly, Anizy, which became holdings of the Church. He was driven off from Chavignon, and placed a curse upon the village: 'To labour always, and never grow rich.'

The domain of the Church was created. Quickly it grew. The bishopric of Soissons, founded in the third century; that of Laon, which dates from the fifth, waxed fat on royal bounties showered on their parishes and monasteries. Chilperic granted Fresnes-en-Lannois and Pierremande to the Abbey of Saint-Amand. Charles the Bald granted Guny and Ressons to Notre-Dame. The Abbey of Saint-Médard, in the diocese of Soissons, which had already received Crouy from Charles Martel, Vic-sur-Aisne from Berthe, the daughter of Charlemagne, Saint-Laurent, Saint-Waast, and the right to mint from Louis the Debonnaire, was to obtain Berzy-le-Sec and Coyolles from Charles the Bald. Charles the Bald also gave Vauclerc to the Abbey of Saint-Bernard; and his successors bestowed Pargny, Chavignon, Billy-sur-Aisne, and Trosly-Loire on Notre-Dame of Soissons. The Abbey of Saint-Vincent and Notre-Dame of Laon enjoyed similar largesse. Bishops and abbots, invested with secular power, fortified themselves as feudal lords. As early as 980, the Archbishop of Rheims built the first stronghold of Coucy, and, soon after, the Abbot of Saint-Crepin, the first castle of Pinon. The Churches of Saint-Médard, of Crouy, of Sept-

monts, of Berzy-le-Sec, and of Ambleny were also fortified.

The secular clergy, whose task was one of liaison with the times, strengthened its hold by multiplying the number of parishes. Elinand, the great Bishop of Laon, set the example and on all sides, in town and country, new churches blossomed forth. To the Cathedrals of Soissons and Laon were added Saint-Pierre à la Chaux, Notre-Dame des Vignes, Saint-Jean des Vignes, Saint-Remi, Saint-Leger, Saint-Crepin, Saint-Waast, Saint-Pierre du Parvis, Saint-Martin, Saint-Vincent. Throughout the countryside at Crouy, Coucy, Anizy, Pommiers, Belleu, Saint-Pierre-aux-Bois, Blérancourt, Mont-Notre-Dame, Missy, Vailly, Pernant, Camelin, Vic-sur-Aisne, Chevregny, Nogent-sous-Coucy, Chaillevois, Vaurezis, Corbeny, Urcel, Laffaux, Berzy-le-Sec, Ambleny, Vauclerc, Saint-Gobain, Saint-Nicholas-aux-Bois, Valséry, Mons-en-Laonnois, Saint-Julien, Royaucourt, village spires pointing heavenward bore witness to the ardour of local convictions.[1]

To the parish activities of the secular clergy were added the monastic labours of the regular orders. The monastery, in this world of violence, was the inviolable asylum where conscience took sanctuary. It sheltered the élite of the Church. It was, as they say, the entering wedge of the Church's holiness. By its importance one might gauge the warmth of religious fervour, and here that fervour shone with unsurpassed brilliance. Six abbeys were built by the

[1] These very villages were the theatre of Franco-American coöperation from 1917 to 1924.

Benedictine monks between the fifth and the tenth centuries, three by Cistercians between the eighth and the twelfth centuries; four by Premonstratensians; one by Johanneans; three by Minims; two by Capuchins; two by Feuillants; one by Picputians; one by the Order of Sainte-Geneviève; one by the Order of Saint-Croix; one Commandery of the Knights of Malta; besides five great convents and nunneries; all rich, powerful, sovereign, with their vassals, their men-at-arms, their taxes, their justice — for centuries the only local authority of any stability.

Nowhere in France did religious art flourish more vigorously. Not only have we some of the finest examples of Roman and Gothic, but both are to be seen in astonishing diversity at every stage of their evolution. The genesis of style was admirably illustrated in the Abbey of Notre-Dame de Soissons, built in 655. As soon as the first inspiration dawned, which was to sweep away the clumsy Merovingian masonry by introducing vaulted ceilings; as soon as the earliest primitive Roman appeared, it was seen at Soissons in the crypts of Saint-Médard and Saint-Leger. And you could follow it through the countryside in many village churches: in the chapel of Sainte-Berthe, near Pargny; at Fontenoy, Camelin, Chivy, Trucy, Chevregny, Chavignon, whose semi-circular apse and stunted capitals gave a foretaste of the coming architecture.

When, after the great awakening of the year 1000, secondary Roman was at its best, with its semi-circular arches, its perfect curves, the harmony of its vaulting, its portals, and windows and galleries

grouped and storied behind the high altar, its plain unornamented façades, its square and octagonal towers, the Soissonnais and the Laonnois owed a matchless adornment to the wealth of their quarries and the genius of their architects. The Bishop of Laon, the great Elinand, made his See the indefatigable centre of sacred art. A magnificent rivalry sprang up, to which bore witness the Abbey of Saint-Vincent at Laon, the Churches of Berzy-le-Sec, Ressons-le-Long, Vailly, Vasseny, Vaurezis, Nogent-sous-Coucy, the Abbey of Saint-Martin at Laon. From plainest to richest, from pastoral simplicity to monastic majesty, every form of pure Roman was here represented. It seemed that as far as this country was concerned, the lines of religious art were forever fixed.

Yet those lines changed and became more intricate, as several churches show. Buttresses, interlacing arches and aisles, unknown to the austerity of a preceding age, made their appearance. Recesses were cut into the massive walls, and tracery made its appearance. The lamp of force dimmed and the lamp of beauty brightened. Diffidently, at first, the Gothic sought to ally itself with the Roman. Nowhere better than between Oise and Aisne could the transition be followed. Barely suggested at Vaurezis by a single lancet arch, it asserted itself at Urcel with a Gothic nave and a Roman porch; at Pommiers, where, if the choir was Gothic, the transept and belfry were Roman; at Laffaux, where Gothic windows peered discursively from between Roman arches; at Saconin, where everything was Roman except the porch; at

Coucy-la-Ville, in the chapel of the Knights Templar at Laon, and at Notre-Dame of Laon, where the divorce of the two styles was magnificently revealed.

Henceforth Gothic is queen. To gain height without sacrificing strength; to obviate the breaking of arches; to permit, without weakening the walls, the direct lighting of the nave, Gothic replaced the single arc by two arcs intersecting at the summit of the vault and strengthened the walls by buttresses. The churches of this age were more closely associated than previously with the life of the times. The architects were laymen. They were built by the people as a whole. They gave expression to local pride as much as to faith. Take stock of them, for no French province has a greater abundance: the Cathedral of Soissons, one of the most perfect of the thirteenth century; the Cathedral of Laon, of which Villard de Honnecourt says, 'I have visited many countries. Never, in any place, have I seen towers equal to those of Laon'; the Churches of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes at Soissons, of Ambleny, of Cœuvres, of Saint-Pierre Aigle, of Rouaucourt, of Paissy, of Mont-en-Laonnois; the Abbeys of Vauclerc and Valsery — all bore striking witness to collective vitality. The builders proved their worth and handed down their fame to posterity, as attested by the proud inscription of Soissons: '*Sequuntur nomina eorum qui ecclesiam compleverunt.*'

And how vigorous the race! What constructive effort at home, what wealth of contacts abroad! The pilgrimages of Mont-Notre-Dame and of Missy; the Councils of Soissons (744 and 1115); of Quierzy (849);

of Laon (1146 and 1233) made manifest the spiritual and ritual activity of the Church of the Aisne. The conventions signed by Hugues Capet with the Bishops of Soissons and of Laon attested its political power. Between the first in the year 907, and the second in 990, the throne of France was founded at Noyon. To Bouvines, the first of our national victories, the Abbey of Saint-Médard of Soissons sent its men-at-arms, who, the chroniclers state, 'full of prowess and gallantry fought as virtuously on foot as on horseback.' In the amazing epic of the crusades, the Churches of Soissons and Laon distinguished themselves by the great number and renown of the knights they sent: Yves de Nesle, Thomas de Marle, Raoul de Nesle, Hugues de Vermandois, Enguerrand de Coucy. The bishops closely associated with the beginnings of the third dynasty, privileged to receive the kings crowned at Rheims in their Château of Septmonts, were powerful in the royal councils. The Church between the Oise and the Aisne was unsurpassed in prestige.

Unsurpassed also in services rendered to the preservation of human knowledge and the safeguarding of civilization. Bishops, chapters, and monasteries were the guardians of the flame in the Dark Ages. They were the sole refuge of learning, erudition, and science in an era of brutality. In the twelfth century the school of Laon and its chief, Anselm, 'the doctor of doctors,' gathered together and preserved the vestiges of ancient thought. From their hands the lords received, with the laws of chivalry, what little discipline they were capable of. Bishops, such as William of Champeau and Jean Juvenal of the Ursins,

were the honour of their province and the honour of their time. Their See of Laon gave Pope Urbain IV to the Church. The Church also provided the only charitable institutions for the poor and the sick; leper-houses, lazarettos, Hôtels-Dieu, hospitals, more numerous between the Oise and the Aisne than anywhere else in France.

But who says life, says struggle. Because a living force, the Church was stirred to its very marrow by the strife which divided France. Forever at war with the nobles who sought to usurp its lands and titles, it was to check them that Beraud, Bishop of Soissons, invented the 'Peace of God,' which feudal resistance restricted to a mere 'Truce of God.' Forever at war with the people, when the Commune of Laon obtained its first charter the Count-Bishop Gaudry withdrew it. Whereupon his flock very properly butchered him in a cask in which he had hidden and engraved on his tombstone these words, 'The Sheep have slaughtered the Shepherd.' (*Pastorem jugulavit ovis.*) Fifty-five years afterwards another bishop, Roger of Rozoy, decimated the militia of the confederated communes. Memories worth bearing in mind when modern times give rise to anti-clericalism.

More threatening than these political and social quarrels was the spiritual peril. I do not refer to conflicts of interest between bishops and chapters, nor even to conflicts of doctrine which led to the condemnation of Gottschalk and Abélard by the councils of Quierzy and Soissons. But in the sixteenth century, the Reformation rose up against Rome. Calvin spent his youth at Noyon-sur-Oise. He was curé at

Marteville, a little farther north. In 1566 at Chauny the Calvinists set up their first stronghold. Laon resisted them, but Soissons fell into their hands and was sacked. The venerated relics of Nogent-sous-Coucy were fed to the flames. In no province was religious strife, continued by the Ligue to the threshold of the seventeenth century, more violent. Fifty years later it very nearly started all over again, at Laon, with Jansenism. All the hatred and the passion which religious wars have bequeathed to France is concentrated in this narrow region.

That is perhaps why the Revolution, not overbloody in the Soissonnais and the Laonnois, was hard only on Churchmen and Church property. Soissons, barely restored from past devastations, was once again sacked. The abbeys were seized, emptied, thrown down. For little or nothing a gang of speculators, formed of quarry-workers and vine-growers, bought the marvels of Saint-Médard and sold them for building material. Alone survived, with the crypt of the abbey turned into a warehouse, the portal of Saint-Pierre-au-Parvis, the spire of Saint-Jean des-Vignes and Saint-Leger. The Feuillants of Blérancourt were likewise devastated. It went hard with the priests and monks at Bichancourt, Saint-Gobain, Champs, Pont-Saint-Mard, Guny, Trosly-Loire, Nogent-sous-Coucy, Prémontré. In this last abbey the former Superior-General was thrown into prison. Few heads fell. But the blow dealt was a crushing one from which recovery was impossible. If not the moral strength, the splendour of the Church in these parts is gone forever.

Even when shorn of its privileges by the convulsions attendant upon the birth of the modern world, it retained the glory of having maintained, amid the individualistic anarchy of feudal times, the twin ideas of universality and unity. Thus the Church made possible the renaissance of criticism from which it suffered, and obliged its detractors to remain its heirs. After Saint-Remi, Calvin! Without the former, what would the latter have been?

III

Force

Two temporal powers struggled under the eyes of the Church, with her and against her, for the heritage of Rome: the nobility and royalty.

Having gained a foothold in Gaul, the Germanic tribes applied to property those principles of personal subordination which bound them to their warlords: and it was feudalism. As early as the tenth century, the keep of Coucy, that citadel of feudal pride, was the outward and visible sign of this régime. The Gallo-Roman villa owed its security to the central power. Henceforth the individual was to rely on himself alone, and seek, behind the massive stone walls of his dwelling, to insure himself against the risks he inflicted upon others and which might recoil upon him. Built by an archbishop, usurped by a layman, Coucy, after throwing a wall around the houses huddled at its feet, was to dominate them by its central tower around which runs a double moat. Two hundred and twelve feet high, like a cathedral; three hundred and fifty feet in circumference; one hundred in diameter; walls fourteen feet thick — here is the feudal lord's nest.

A fortress as well as a city. Ready for war with its embattled parapets, its machicolated turrets, its corbels, its loopholes, its moats, its drawbridges, its underground defenses, its dungeons, the castle had delicate ironwork and wood panelling, its hall of knights-gallant and its hall of ladies for festive oc-

casions. It dominated and it protected. It protected against the neighbour, the robber, the enemy. In return for the protection, it dominated all who dwelt within its shadow. The region is full of such fortresses but Coucy is typical of them all. There was Quierzy-sur-Oise. There was Anizy. There was Bazouches, with its eleven towers. The spirit which dwelt there was still that of the *leudes* of Soissons. Roman order had vanished before the disorder of German individualism. For more than five hundred years we shall be able to trace it.

Two maxims tell the story of these times. The first, 'No lord without land; no land without lord'; and its complement, 'Who land has, war has.' To fight to win land, to fight to enlarge it, to fight to keep it, was the feudal ideal, the very negation of the idea of government. In the Soissonnais, Latin heredity reacted. In the Laonnois, the feudal principle reigned supreme. For this was the borderland of two forces whose struggles were merged in the first centuries of French life. Soissons was Neustria, and the continuous effort towards organized unity. Laon was Austrasia, with its ungovernable *leudes*, which gave Charlemagne to the world only to destroy his work. Up to the time of the Ligue, feudalism formidably entrenched in eastern France, was to defend its positions against the King who marched from east to west. The central axis of the struggle lay between Laon, the Austrasian, and Soissons, the Neustrasian.

During the lulls of battle, the men of those days, influenced by the Church, and the laws of chivalry aiding, set up and carried on certain forms of social life,

the aim of which, though still a test of strength, led to a relative improvement in manners. The Laonnois and Soissonnais were famous from the thirteenth century for the splendour of their knightly tournaments. In 1175, Yves de Nesle, Count of Soissons, entertained his guests, among whom were the Count of Hainaut, Raoul de Coucy, Raoul de Clermont, Bouchard de Montmorency, at a great tournament which stretched from Braisne to Soissons. In 1187, the Valley of the Ailette, called the golden vale, was the scene of a similar festivity organized by Raoul de Coucy, in honour of the Duke of Limburg, the Counts of Hainaut, Namur, Soissons, Blois, the lords of Oudenarde, of Gavre, of Mortagne, of Braisne, of Quievrain, of Gistelle, of Rozoy, of Rumigny, of Moy, of Chavigny, and others too numerous to mention: a never-to-be-forgotten occasion which lasted not less than a whole week and the memory of which is still cherished by local tradition.

There were magnificent feats of arms, single combats, and feasts. The knights cut and thrust, ate and drank, paid their court to fair ladies. 'Arise, my lords, the day has come,' the heralds proclaimed at dawn, and the fête lasted till night fell. Many gages of love were exchanged in these meetings. Amid thousands, the chronicles have handed down the tragic story of Raoul de Coucy and the Dame de Fayel. We owe a vast literature, richer in sentiment than in tradition, to those intrigues of the days of chivalry. The Sieur de Coucy and Yves de Nesle, Count of Soissons, were famous poets. The first sang of his lady, and of Spring:

Commencement de douce saison bele
Que je vois revenir
Remembrance d'amour qui me rappele
Dont ja ne puis partir.

And sadly the latter echoed:

Hélas! ma dame est si dure
Que de ma joie n'a cure
Ne de ma dolor guérir.

Then they resumed their armour, set their lances in rest against their foes, devastated their neighbours, defied the King, or crusaded against the unbelievers. Herbert de Vermandois died at Tarsus; Enguerrand de Coucy at Nicopolis. The lords of this country were the leaders of their day.

A great life, but a costly one. Costly to the poor who had to pay for it; costly to the great who gradually set everybody against them. The kings, with 'their long arms,' as Suger said, had much to do with this revolt, and derived no little profit from it. But not without woe. For they were anything but popular around Laon and Soissons, and each local monument bore witness to the precarious nature of their dawning power. In Saint-Médard, at Soissons, the nobles had shaven and deposed King Louis the Debonnaire. At Coucy, Hugues de Vermandois had imprisoned King Charles the Simple. At Quierzy-sur-Oise the edict making fiefs and benefices hereditary had been signed. Later, without arousing criticism, Enguerrand de Coucy, who had become Baron of Bedford by his marriage with a daughter of the King of England, took advantage of this fact to

obtain scandalous immunity for his possessions when the English made war in France.

And yet, from the beginning, fate had ordained that this corner of France should be the cradle of royal and national unity. Since the Treaty of Verdun in 843, the Laonnois and the Soissonnais have been part of France and they have always remained French, unlike our eastern, western, and southern provinces, which so often have changed hands. Before the Christian era, Soissons had been the capital of Divitiac; in Gallo-Roman times, the capital of Syagrius; under the Franks, that of Clovis and his successors. The kings of the first two dynasties called themselves 'Kings of Montlaon,' and Montlaon is Laon on its hilltop. The next three dynasties, which were to make of France a nation, instinctively clung to this country — in which they resided and sought refuge — covered it with buildings, remains of which have been handed down by the centuries.

In Merovingian and Carolingian times royal residences and palaces were built at Coucy, at Missy-sur-Aisne, at Coyolle, at Cuisy-en-Almont, at Quierzy. Clothaire died at Braisne; Charles Martel is buried there. At Quierzy, Pepin had himself crowned. Four times, from 754 to 769, he assembled his followers there, and there obtained their support for his expedition against the Lombards, our first Italian war. Charlemagne appeared — and the land between the Oise and the Aisne was filled with his glory. In the Palace of Saint-Médard, at Crouy, the Emperor received Pope Leo III, organized his school of plain chant, and signed some of his most famous edicts.

At Saint-Médard also, Charles the Bald had his wife Hermintrude crowned, and hard by, at Chavignon in the Canton of Vailly, he held the first assembly of notables in 844. I have already mentioned the edict of 877, signed at Quierzy. In 936, at Laon, Louis d'Outre Mer was crowned. Although hailing from the east, the Carolingians soon saw that the Soissons and Laon triangle was an essential base. Already it was the heart of France.

It grew more and more so under their successors who were to build the nation. Duke Eudes, who paved the way for Hugues Capet's success, fortified the castle of Vic-sur-Aisne, to command the river and the port. In 987, Hugues established himself at Soissons, and in 992, at Laon. Between-times, when the nobles were off their guard in 989, he had himself acknowledged as king at Noyon: it was the dawn of monarchy. Even when Paris was made the capital, Soissons retained royal prerogatives. The kings held parliaments there in 1169 and 1212. At Laon they signed the Treaty of 1317, embodying the Salic law, which settled the succession. The village of Pernant, in the district of Soissons, will not soon forget the visits of Saint Louis. From the fourteenth century on, between the Oise and the Aisne, local history and royal history were one.

This seizure of authority did not go unchallenged. The feudal lords, heirs of Germanic tradition, and the kings, restorers of Latin unity, waged constant war. War began on the day when the jolly Louis V, always hither and yon, threw down more than half the walls of Coucy, in whose keep Charles the Simple had

tasted the bitterness of feudal prisons. Later, Saint Louis, sitting beneath his oak, was to sentence another Coucy, whose soldiers had hanged three pupils of the Abbey of Saint Nicholas. Thus, for the first time in France was applied the principle, borrowed by royal jurists from Roman law, 'What the King wills, the law wills.' And now in the name of this same right, which, in the person of the King, had made so subtle a distinction between the prince and the sovereign, there appeared among the nobility at Laon and Soissons royal agents who were to be the undoers of feudal power. The King could still put the old question, 'Who made thee Count?' None dared to reply, 'Who made thee King?'

Let us follow the magnificent efforts which made France, the patient upbuilding of royal power in this land of transition, which is neither Champagne nor Picardy nor Ile de France, but the link of all three. What the Hohenstauffens failed in beyond the Rhine, the Capetians here accomplished. By direct annexation to the royal domain whenever possible; by the imposition of central authority upon local power when annexation was impossible, amalgamation continued unrelentingly. From the time of Louis-le-Gros, the Laonnois was virtually included in the royal domain, and at each vacancy the Count-Bishop bowed to the royal prerogative of intervention. The Count of Soissons was now no more than a small feudal lord. The Coucys and the Vermandois alone remained powerful, but the process of erosion went on. Philippe-Auguste added the greater part of the Vermandois to his domain. In 1400, the House of Orleans bought

the lordship of Coucy and the County of Soissons. Later, Henry IV, who through the Vendômes was heir of the Counties of Marle, of Soissons, and of la Fère, united them to the crown. It was a long and laborious process. So, without further delay, throughout the region, rights of succession were forestalled by political and administrative pressure.

At the end of the twelfth century, royal justice was administered at Laon for the bailiwick of Vermandois. In the thirteenth century, the Bishop of Laon was one of the twelve peers of France, whose newborn dignity attested the royal power. With Saint Louis the royal coinage and royal burghers made their appearance. In the fourteenth century, royal provosts were appointed at Soissons, Laon, and Coucy. In 1552, the Presidial of Laon was founded. After a few upheavals — sieges of Soissons in 1414, 1567, and 1615; of Laon in 1594; destruction of Coucy in 1652 — the aim was achieved: financial administration, the Treasury General at Soissons; political administration, the Intendance of Soissons; judicial administration, the bailiwick of Vermandois; military administration, the government of Picardy; at Coucy, at Chauny, at Craonne, sub-administrations. When in a suit over a succession in the Laonnois, the royal judges declared that 'The King cannot be vassal of any land,' their decision gave final expression to the work of ten centuries.

The King had broken the lord. Why? First, because monarchy was morally and intellectually superior to feudalism; because its authority was higher and farther removed; because it corresponded

to the age-old need of order and stability; but also because from the earliest times monarchy had identified itself with an ideal that the nobility served only later: the national ideal. At the battle of 1125, against the German Emperor, Louis V was the rallying point. At the great fight at Bouvines in 1214, Philippe-Auguste carried the flag. Hugues Capet already boasted that he did not speak German, and under one of his successors the people of Sissonn echoed the same sentiment by petitioning for the right to change the name of their commune, Sissonn l'Allemande to that of Sissone la Françoise. When national pride thus manifested itself, it was to the King that it made appeal; it was to the King that it turned. Philippe le Bel was the hero of the nation when, returning some summons or other to the Emperor of Germany, he scrawled across the margin, the words 'Troup alement!' [1] Henceforth, the King was France.

What yesterday was feudalism now became rebellion and treason. When the nobles of the Soissonnais took the Duke of Burgundy's part against the King, no one was surprised at the violence of the repression in 1414. When the nobles of the Laonnois fought for the Ligue, Henry IV had the people on his side; and when, in 1594, he forced Laon to surrender after a severe siege, every one was happy. The revolt of Soissons during the minority of Louis XIII was rapidly suppressed. The Fronde was the final convulsion, and Mazarin, Abbot of Saint-Médard, of Soissons, as well as Minister of the King, met with the people's applause when he blew up the sym-

[1] Too German.

bolic towers of Coucy with two tons of black powder. Order now reigned in France. The pushing back of the frontiers under Louis XIV, and their fortification by Vauban, gave the people of Soissons and Laon the feeling that order reigned abroad. National life had found its expression. The subject felt loyalty to France!

While the fate of these provinces was being debated, they continued to enjoy the special affection and particular solicitude of the monarchy. Francis I, Henry II, Henry IV, often resided there. It was at Folembray that Henry IV received Gabrielle d'Estrées, whom he afterwards established at Coucy, where she was brought to bed. At Folembray also he signed the edict of 1596, which paved the way to peace with the Ligue. Often, too, the Château de Vauxbuin, near Soissons, sheltered his amours. Soissons, Laon, Corbeny, had royal residences. Frequent gifts to the cities proved the affection of the kings. For years they furnished funds to build ramparts; and later, peace being assured, hospitals.

The nobility, removed from political power and deprived of its sovereignty, transformed its seats of war into seats of pleasure. Henceforth the nobles were courtiers, either of high degree like the Duke d'Orléans, successor of the Coucys, or commoners ennobled for services rendered to the royal house, like Potiers, Duke of Gesvres and Lord of Blérancourt; like Dupleix, Lord of Mercin. The peasant saw little of them, envied their wealth, and complained of their absence. There only remained on the land the minor nobility, too poor to go to Court, no better off than

the commoners, yet threatened by the rising flood of anger against privilege. In 1789, they paid with and for the others, even the most inoffensive of them, like the charming Viscount Desfossés, who represented Soissons at the Constituent Assembly. As had been the abbeys, so were the castles doomed. Coucy illuminated on hearing that its lord, the Duc d'Orléans, had had his head cut off. Popular anger completed the work done by the monarchy against a political power which had become a social class and, in its new condition, had lost its *raison d'être*.

Monarchy also, a few months later, was to collapse in turmoil. In these provinces it had found the strength to enlarge the family fief — at first small, then rounded out, at last grown wonderfully — the family fief which in eight hundred years had become the France of to-day. Between Laon, Soissons, Chauny, we are in the heart of the country, where the kings built France. Here they placed their seal upon the work. Here were broken the assaults of the Armagnacs, of the Bourguignons, of the Calvinists, of the Ligue, of the English, of the German Emperors, of the Spaniards, and of the Germans. Individualism, courage, love of adventure, are the virtues which the feudal nobles bequeathed to this land. To our kings, the honour of having made it the keystone of the nation as well as the heart of France!

IV

Numbers

Last upon the scene, but first by numbers, comes the anonymous crowd, which has taken centuries to pose itself, centuries to oppose itself, centuries to impose itself — the People, who, throughout so many hardships, have found within themselves the strength to serve those who served France.

Genesis? Slavery! Roman law distinguished between the free settler of Soissons and Vic-sur-Aisne and the rustic slave of Coucy. But in either case it was the serfdom of man. The Franks changed nothing. The first guarantee of individual liberty came to the serfs of the Church when it permitted them to enter into wedlock at its altars. The second, paradoxically enough, came to them from feudalism, when feudalism, for its own sake, recognized the right of the serf not to be driven away from the land he cultivated. Settlers and serfs alike, riveted to the soil by unbreakable chains, found in it their real master. This gave rise to that indestructible love of man for the soil which, despite seditions, wars, and revolutions, has survived every liberation.

The serfs of the Laonnois and Soissonnais, no matter how heavy successive yokes — Gallic chiefs, Cymric brenns, Roman consuls, Gallo-Roman senators, Clovis, his sons, the Merovingians, the Carolingians, the *leudes*, and the officers of State — retained enough introspection to respond, in the year

1000, to the appeal of the bishops. Stone upon stone, they raised the walls of cathedrals and churches. A great cry of hope rose to heaven, and on earth places of prayer, of meeting, of discussion. Thus were born our cities, with their sense of order, their turn for trade, their taste for organization. Thus was accumulated the wealth, which was one of the principal instruments of political freedom. Thus the tolling of the church bell, become the voice of the city, awoke the first longings for independence in the hearts of the people.

What did the people want? To live and — in order to live — to restrict in some measure the absolute right of requisition, personal and fiscal, which was the feudal lord's; to free, if not man's purse, at least man's body; to replace arbitrary power by a minimum of safeguards. It was natural that the cities should set the example, because of their population, which was more dense; because of their wealth, derived from trade. The communal movement resulted: 'a new and hateful word,' wrote the monk Guibert of Nogent-sous-Coucy. A word of no mean future either, seeing that in France as in Russia the most recent revolutions have found no better. In 1105, Saint-Quentin wrested its communal charter from the Counts of Vermandois. Five years later, Laon followed suit. A struggle was beginning which was to last for centuries.

A struggle whereby the Laonnois and Soissonnais were deeply divided — a tragic and most bloody struggle. Laon had scarcely been organized as a commune when the Count-Bishop tore up the charter

and paid with his life for this breach of faith. In 1128, a new charter which the canons of the chapter, unable to refuse, carefully defined: 'It is,' they said, 'a novelty by which the man of servile condition, by means of an annual payment, releases himself from all the duties of servitude.' The example was quickly followed. To cries of 'Commune, Commune!' Soissons, the other great ecclesiastical city of the region, demanded guarantees. And at the beginning of the twelfth century its tradesmen and artisans drew up their first local constitution, an empiric and imperfect makeshift halfway between the rights of the feudal lord and the aspirations of liberty. Then the countryside took a hand. Till then rural charters had been rare. Beyond those of Pommiers and Chevregny, granted by Louis d'Outre-Mer in the tenth century and that of Pont-Saint-Mard, which was of the eleventh, there were none. In the course of the twelfth century the communal flame spread like a forest fire. Nogent-sous-Coucy in 1117, Pargny, Filain, Condé in 1125, Morsain, in 1128, Vailly, in 1130, Marizelle, in 1160, Anizy, in 1174, Coucy-le-Château, in 1197, Saint-Pierre-Aigle, Crécy-au-Mont, Vaudesson, Coucy-la-Ville, Fresne-en-Laonnois, Folembray, Trosly-Loire, Allemant, Guny, in 1247, proclaimed the new law. Already in the midst of revolt, the sense of association asserted itself. Anizy grouped five villages to form the 'commune de Laonnois,' and the people of Crécy-au-Mont also sought the support of their neighbours. To curb the forces of feudalism, the law of the charter; to defend the charter, the strength of union.

Many a hard blow was given and taken. I have mentioned the drama of Laon in 1107, and the battle of Chailvet in 1178 between the Count-Bishop, Roger de Rozoy, and his peasants. In this duel the people would have succumbed but for assistance — at times occult, at times overt — from the King. In England feudalism was the handmaiden of the Monarchy against the people. In France, the Monarchy supported the people against the feudal lords. A common enemy? Joint action. Was the granting of a charter being negotiated? Some royal agent, counsellor of pleas, or doctor of laws lent a hand. If conflict arose, the power of monarchy intervened. The King in Council, not without advantage to himself, recorded the compromises reached by nobles and commons. The King confirmed the charters, once they were obtained: the Charter of Soissons in 1181, that of Laon in 1189, those of the Laonnois-rural in 1179 and 1259. It was a fundamental, traditional right of monarchy, and contributed as nought else to establish the royal prestige. The day when, hard pressed for money, the Monarchy abandoned it, and, as in 1771, suppressed the municipal liberties of Soissons to replace them by venal privileges sold to the highest bidder, the Revolution was not far off.

Another tie between the People and the Monarchy: national defense. Because the King was the first on the frontier if the frontier were threatened, the hearts of the people went out to him as the defender of France. Long before the privileged classes, the commoners of this region discerned the national character of the battle which Monarchy waged against its

eastern and western neighbours. We have seen the men-at-arms of Saint-Médard opening the battle. In 1429, in the days of Joan of Arc, the people of Laon threw the English out of the town before the arrival of the royal troops, who had halted at Corbeny. In 1818, despite orders from Paris, the Laonnois, worthy of their sires, held up the surrender of the town to the Allies for a whole month. A new class was born, whose epic is history: the People of France.

The people insisted on having their say in matters of national destiny. In law, they had no right to do so; in effect, they had, because their money was needed. Here again both Church and Monarchy lent themselves to the wishes of the People, the former by throwing open its ranks, thus facilitating the formation of an élite chosen from the most deserving; the latter, by seeking the support of public opinion. As early as the thirteenth century, the bourgeoisie of Laon and Soissons attended the first States-General. Saint Louis, creator of the royal bourgeoisie, which after collective effort was to be the individual instrument of freedom, summoned two bourgeois of Laon with eight of their peers from other towns 'to consider the state of the Treasury.' The first political act of the Third Estate. At the States-General of Paris, in 1314, the Deputies of Soissons took a large part in the financial debate. In 1484, at the States-General of Tours, the six Deputies of the Vermandois presented the petition against excessive taxation. Jean Bodin, President of the Court of Laon, in the sixteenth century, was the orator of the States-General of Blois.

These men came from cities which despite wars and sieges had known periods of prosperity. In the fourteenth century, Soissons was reputed to be 'abounding in wealth and sunk in debauchery.' But what was true of the cities was not true of the country; and it was the awful suffering of the fields which prepared the stormy birth of modern times. There in the open were no walls to stop enemies or thieves; nought but a frightful succession of battles, of pillages, of oppression; the Hundred Years' War, the civil wars, the religious wars, which frequently forced the kings to forego all taxation from villages in the Soissonnais, where nothing was left. Against the privileged classes, who fought at the expense of the poor, the Jacquerie was the most plausible explosion of peasant wrath. Two centuries later, hardship was still a habit. Of it Antoine Richard, controller of finances at Laon, said: 'It is not only around Laon that many cultivators have given up their holdings from poverty and necessity, but also around the Thiérache. . . . The rich peasants have sold most of their birthright at very low prices to procure barley, oats, and bran to feed themselves and their families. The others are dying of hunger, sickness, and disease.'

France shone with the glory of Louis XIV, but the ills of the countryside were not remedied. Who has not read La Bruyere? — 'One sees as it were wild animals, males and females, scattered through the fields, black, livid, and sunburnt, riveted to the soil which they harrow and turn with invincible stubbornness.' In 1757, a starving wolf carried off a young woman from the doors of Septmonts. This region,

whose soil is the richest in France, suffered from chronic famine. In 1788, the provincial assembly of the Soissonnais declared that 'hardship has become excessive.' There were a few rare exceptions, a few families clinging to estates of the nobility which they were some day to buy in, and whence have sprung the rural dynasties of which more anon. But taken as a whole, the situation was lamentable, and the Marquis de Mirabeau was right when he said, 'Agriculture, as these peasants pursue it, is as bad as the galleys.' The vine-growers of the Laonnois poured their wine into the river, to escape ruinous taxes. What with tax-collectors who took half the produce of the land if the estate was large, and all of it if small, privations made worse by requisitions from Paris, epidemics ever on the increase, the '*pauvre peuple*' was indeed very poor. However great its patience, such things could not endure.

When, in 1789, Bailly, 'labourer from Crecy-au-Mont,' and Leclerc de Laonnois, 'labourer from the Bailiwick of Chauny,' went to take their seats in the Constituent Assembly, everything was ripe for an explosion, psychological conditions as well as economic. At the call of newsmongers and lawyers, this people, which had already produced critics like Abélard, Calvin, and Condorcet, took up the thread of ancient sedition. From their ranks came Camille Desmoulins, the Kerensky of the Palais-Royal; Gracchus, the father of Communism; Saint-Just, Robespierre's *alter ego;* Fouquier-Tinville, purveyor to the guillotine. At the provincial assembly of the Soissonnais, in 1787, the first rumblings had been heard. Less than

three years afterwards, from the Oise to the Aisne, the whole countryside was up and doing. The fever of Revolution was upon it. Following the rhythm of political crises, for seven years it was to give free rein to its passions.

First, the disappearance of the bishops, mitred abbots, canons, lords. Then, the appearance of Committees of Public Welfare with self-conferred powers of proscription, which from words passed to deeds. Names of streets were changed, and alongside the rue de la Montagne, Soissons had its rue de l'Indivisibilité, its rue Marat, its rue Ça Ira. Coucy changed its name from Coucy-le-Château to Coucy-la-Montagne and branded the Duke of Orleans. Bichancourt and Guny drove out or incarcerated their priests. The Premonstratensian monks, famous for their wealth, were dispersed and pillaged. In the garden of the Count of Lauraguais, at Manicamp, Saint-Just, deputy of Chauny, renewed the gesture of Tarquinius. When, a few months later, he sent orders to Paris to arrest all the nobles, no one mistook their meaning: heads were to fall like flowers. And the prisons were filling.

By good fortune, the Sieur Lebas, delegate of the Committee of Public Safety for the Soissonnais, had no taste for bloodshed. He mislaid papers, lost documents, and managed to drag out prosecutions, so that when the Terror ended, nearly all the accused from this region were still alive. Released from prison, they witnessed the execution of Saint-Just, who had sent them there. Little blood was shed. But the face of the country changed. At Soissons, churches and

abbeys were savagely destroyed, for the people well knew for how long they had paid tithes. At Coucy, the castle, now the property of the Nation, was emptied of its furniture, even its doors and windows were taken. The Commune, hoping to save it, presented it to the hospital. But the hospital needed funds and turned it into a quarry, reducing it to such condition that the Duke of Orleans, thirty-five years later, was able to buy it back for six thousand francs. The Sieur Cagnon likewise demolished the abbey of Prémontré which he had bought for little or nothing in 1795. And at Blérancourt another gang of speculators treated the château and the convent likewise. Thieves and highwaymen infested the forests of Coucy and Saint-Gobain. Yet on fête-days the Goddess Reason was honoured by processions. A *sans-culotte* led a beflowered and beribboned plough over which floated this inscription, the voice of the soil in those hours of madness: 'The soil nourishes the State. The French respect and protect it.'

When all was over, the sons of Roman slaves and feudal serfs knew that they were sovereigns. Only, however, to surrender their sovereignty forthwith into the hands of Napoleon. Since then the Soissonnais and the Laonnois have thrice been devastated by foreign wars, but civil war has been unknown. The Revolution of 1830 was gaily carried through under the direction of the elder Dumas, who with a dozen firemen proclaimed the downfall of Charles X without the need of a single barricade. Other régimes followed, but their advent did not disturb the public peace. Fate reserved a new and heavier cross for

this people. At the threshold of the drama how did they stand?

In its immense majority, a rustic race, working harder than its neighbours, known as doing more and better work, as first to garner the harvest, as quick to assimilate modern methods of agriculture. Its physical aspect is varied. The tall Dolichos of the north mingle with the swarthy thickset men of Mediterranean stock. For, with the Gaelic, Latin and German blood, which first coursed in its veins, has been mingled Norman, Flemish, Burgundian, and even Spanish. They call it the Picard race, and this name is as good as any other. 'Choleric Picardy,' said Michelet. Harshness is the dominating trait of these peasants. They are men of the soil; proud of their soil, because it is the best in France; in love with their soil, because they have seen it suffer. And this lends a note of bitterness to their pride as well as to their love. Bitterness towards men; towards men who have made the soil suffer.

Their conception of contemporary life, moulded by the history of the land, can be expressed in one word: property. Modern times which have made the people master of this soil are short and recent indeed compared to the centuries of servitude which have preceded them, centuries whose memory is ever present to the peasant. He knows that before working for itself, his family laboured for others. He has forgotten neither the time of the feudal lord, nor the slow conquest of his communal liberties, nor the legal confiscation by dimes, tithes, and gabelles. The day

came when these chains were broken, and the son of the serf bought a homestead from the national domain, founded his own hearth in independence, and closed his fist, according to the stoic image, on acquired truths, for he is determined to retain forever the possession of the land which he owes to the French Revolution.

Does this mean that this region is politically united? No! The Laonnois and the Soissonnais of 1914, like the rest of France, were divided into two camps. There is a Right and a Left. There are Reds and Whites. The one clericals, the other anti-clericals. The one Conservatives and the other Radicals. But between these contending parties there is a limit to differences, and this limit is the soil. The soil is the rallying point and the basis of implied agreement. Quarrels are appeased if it is mentioned. To the extent that the most reactionary Conservative would never permit any one to lay hands upon the Revolutionary conquests to which he owes his holding, the most advanced Radical would take up arms against any one who suggested collective property. There is a deep-set unity of rural spirit which does not do away with political conflicts, but is stronger than they are and more durable.

The two currents of ideas, which for generations have sought to control the modern world, always form themselves into the same groups: those attached to dogmatic traditions which regulate; those attached to critical speculations which dissociate. Women, intimately sharing the lives of the men, are usually attached to the first of these tendencies. Men, even

the most religious, are never entirely irresponsive to the appeal of free judgment. This is ordained by the intensity of their will, by their fierce determination to be the masters, the only masters of their property and of their acts. Nowhere is the inner conscience kept more secret nor better guarded. Nowhere is the sense of equality and independence more acute. The nobility has lost all authority and is in an absolute minority. The priest exercises only a conventional sway over consciences. Neither orders nor controls. Individualism is a religion.

The soil, passing into the hands of the people, has witnessed the formation among the people themselves of a peasant aristocracy which, enduring, has left an indelible mark upon things and ideals. Many families have lived for several centuries on the same stretches of land. The Lemoines of Saint-Aubin have ploughed the same furrows for three hundred and fifty years, and fifteen other families in the same canton of Coucy have holdings that date back for two centuries. The Demarcys of Beaumont (Canton of Chauny) have five hundred years behind them, thirteen other families, more than two hundred, and everybody else at least one hundred. Likewise in the Canton of Soissons, the twelve branches of the Fertés cultivate, and have cultivated since Louis XIV, some twelve thousand acres; and one might mention the Leroux of Tunnières, the Duvals of Ambleny and of Vezaponin, the Huberts of Septmonts, the Gaillards of Grand-Rozoy, without exhausting the archives of this splendid lineage. English, these people would have become lords; Americans, great bankers or captains

of industry! Here they have remained kings of the soil.

The spirit of a race thus formed cannot be other than essentially local. Absorbed in his endeavour, which does not extend beyond the limits of his field, the Picard, from Oise to Aisne, allows nothing to divert him from it. His interest extends to the boundaries of his commune, not farther. He pays his taxes and considers himself even with society. If war threatens his land, he will fight to defend it. Ask nothing more of him, for he profoundly distrusts anything that might disperse his efforts. Neither the sense of association nor the notion of solidarity is at all developed in him. What the individual cannot do unaided must be done by the State. What the State cannot do will be left undone. You may call this impassibility, egotism, or you may call it pride. You will find it in every commune. Inflexible and hard to deal with, these men have purposely narrowed their horizon.

Within the range of this local patriotism, historical rivalries are as keen as on the first day. Chauny prides itself on being an industrial town in the centre of unchanging fields; as in olden days she used to pride herself upon her population, 'the largest in the Department.' Coucy, whose salt-bins had no equal for size, 'the largest in the province,' continues to look down upon the surrounding cantons. The cities are not less conservative than the rural communities. From papers more than a hundred years old I unearthed an amazing dialogue between Soissons and Laon, which for centuries have been in the habit of

throwing into each other's faces 'the stagnant pools' of the marshes and the 'floods of Madame l'Aisne.'

The question was which of the two cities should be the capital of the Department. Soissons said: 'Soissons is a city which dates back farther and is older than the monarchy of which it was the real cradle; Soissons territory was the first to bear the name of France; Soissons was once the capital of the kingdom, and is now a capital in the French Empire; Soissons saw more than one king of the first two dynasties crowned or deposed, and was the seat of ten or twelve councils; Soissons has all the public services of the province, the storehouse for the wheat, and is one of the principal granaries for the feeding of Paris.' Laon answered in three lines: 'Our city has always had a peculiar aversion to despotism; our city bases its claims on its two hundred years' struggle for the establishment of its commune; and from its ramparts, one can see the frontier.'

When local spirit attains this power of feeling and of expression, centuries may pass, but the granite of character is not affected by the attacks of time. In 1914, the Laonnois and the Soissonnais were what we have seen they were throughout their whole history. War did not take them by surprise. They knew it well, and there was a generous response to national need. But the danger passed and it became necessary to reconstruct what war had destroyed. Then the opposite reflex came into play, isolating the individual. Then, by an astounding paradox, we saw a foreign people bringing to this country the Taylorized efficiency of its methods, its passion

for solidarity, its imperative faith in common social effort. Mating of two ideals, or rather of two instincts. Extraordinary experiment in the conciliation of contraries. In truth, one hardly knows whether to be more surprised that it was attempted, or that it succeeded!

CHAPTER III

AMERICA AND THE WAR

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I

Volunteers

American neutrality, American intervention — on what are opinions more divided? Prophets of the past, expert revealers of foregone events, lovers of fine-drawn conclusions, have all done their utmost to becloud the truth. Those whose imagination pictured a pro-Ally America were put to it to explain thirty-one months of neutrality; the others, who saw the United States as pro-German, were nonplussed by America's entry into the war. Some declared that Wilson had held back the people; some that the people had not followed Wilson. Bitter rivalries of men, of parties, of interests were conjured up in explanation. May I be pardoned for thinking that what happened was much less complex? From 1914 to 1918, the United States remained faithful to its past. It was first anti-war, then pro-war. But, except for a few individuals, it was anti-war or pro-war almost unanimously. The game was played according to rule.

The first reaction which France felt was one of friendship. Early in August, 1914, a shipment was unloaded on the wharf at Havre, addressed: 'French Army, Havre, France'; — it contained surgical dressings. At the same time the Americans in Paris were throwing in their lot with ours. They placed

their hospital in Neuilly at the disposal of the French Government, and organized two others, one in the Lycée Pasteur, the other at Meaux. Around Ambassador Herrick, who refused to associate himself with the flight to Bordeaux and awaited the enemy at his post, the American colony rallied. Their cars and houses were gladly given to transport and nurse the wounded.[1] After the Marne, this volunteer transport service carried wounded to French and British hospitals at Paris-Plage, Hesdin, Abbeville, Saint-Pol, Beauvais, and Dunkirk. How could we look upon these friends of early days as neutrals?

Six weeks passed and the flood-tide of American aid began to submerge our ports. It came in such quantities that the wharves were too small and freight cars too few. To receive and distribute it, the American Clearing House was established in the late autumn of 1914. In the course of four years it received, cleared, and distributed thirty million dollars of American aid, in cash and kind, to French war bodies, official and unofficial. On the other side of the ocean the War Relief Clearing House, established by Mr. Myron T. Herrick and Mr. C. A. Coffin, acted as the American Corresponding Bureau.[2] It grouped hundreds of war relief bodies, most of them for France, others for the

[1] Foremost among those responsible for this immense service were Mr. Robert Bacon, former Ambassador to Paris, Mrs. Wharton, Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt, Mr. C. M. Depew, and Messrs. H. H. Harjes, J. Ridgely Carter, J. H. Hyde, James Stillman, Dr. Joseph A. Blake, and others.

[2] The American Clearing House, established November 13, 1914, was under Mr. H. H. Harjes, as chairman, and among the members of the board were Messrs. Whitney Warren, J. Ridgely Carter, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Dr. Watson, George Munroe, J. H. Hyde, C. R. Scott, and Oscar Beatty.

Allies. The Red Cross, which in 1917 and after did wonders, was still bound down by official neutrality. During the thirty-one months that neutrality lasted, the whole burden of relief was borne by unofficial bodies which made appeal after appeal, and drive after drive, to keep up the endless stream of every conceivable kind of succor.[1]

All of these various war relief bodies, working in such various ways for the same cause, were supported by hundreds of thousands of voluntary contributors,

[1] For France: National Allied Relief Committee, American Field Service, American Fund for French Wounded, Fatherless Children of France, National Surgical Dressings Committee, Secours National, Hostels for Refugees, American Ice Flotilla, American Committee for Training in Suitable Trades the Maimed Soldiers of France, Committee of Mercy, Le Bien-être du Blessé, French Tuberculous War Victims Fund, Franco-American Committee for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, Militia of Mercy, Committee for Men Blinded in Battle, Duryea War Relief, Vacation War Relief Committee, American Women's War Relief Fund, Permanent War Relief War Fund, War Babies Cradle, the League of the Allies, the Junior Patriots of America, Millicent Sutherland Ambulance, French Bureau, Les Gens de Lettres Français, French Actors' Fund, Stage Women's War Relief, Appui aux Artistes, Charité Maternelle de Paris, American Girls' Aid, American Students' Committee of the École des Beaux-Arts, the League of Catholic Women, Allied Home Fund, International Reconstruction League, National League for Women's Service, the Lighthouse, the French Comfort Packet, National Special Aid of Philadelphia, Jewish Committee, Union des Arts.

For Belgium: Belgian Prisoners in Germany, Cardinal Mercier Fund, Belgian Refugees Knitting Yarn Fund.

For Great Britain: London Motor Volunteer Corps, British War Relief Association, May Fair Relief Committee, Chelsea War Refugees Fund, British American War Relief Bureau, the Scottish Highlanders Fund, Lady Helmsley Fund, Irish Babies Fund, Lord Charles Beresford's Fund.

For Italy: The Venetian Fund, New England Italian Relief Committee.

For Russia: Russian War Relief Fund, American Ambulance in Russia, Refugees in Russia.

For other Allies: Serbian Relief Committee, Roumanian Fund, the Polish Victims Relief Fund, Polish Reconstruction Fund, American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief.

whose good will France was able to capitalize. These men and women who devoted themselves to the work had constantly before their eyes the picture of our great trial. They had clearly defined aims. They were not trying to help the Allies in the abstract, but their efforts were directed towards helping given nations for specific purposes. Between them there grew up a rivalry of generosity. Their centres were scattered all over the United States, and although Frenchmen did not even know of their existence, far less their names, each radiated pro-Ally enthusiasm. Every day in every city in America this light grew brighter. In June, 1916, the Allied Bazaar at the Grand Central Palace in New York sold nearly 600,000 tickets on its opening day, and when at its close Muratore sang the 'Marseillaise,' those present, standing amid trophies of war brought from the fields of battle, lifted up their hearts in fervent exaltation.

Millions of Americans were silent; but there were others who spoke. Some reported facts without comment; their stories cleared the air. Others took sides and lent their names to our cause: Richard Harding Davis, Frederick Palmer, Owen Johnson, Alexander Powell, Wythe Williams, Arthur Ruhl, Will Irvin, Walter Hale, Robert McCormick, Irvin Cobb, Joseph Patterson, Robert Herrick, Roland Usher, H. A. Gibbons, created a war literature. Mrs. Wharton, Owen Wister, J. J. Chapman, James Beck, Morton Fullerton, Morton Prince, Wayne MacVeagh, Mark Baldwin, but above all Charles W. Eliot and Walter H. Page, came out unreservedly

against Germany. 'If Lincoln lived,' asked Prince, 'would he be silent?' Another wrote, 'When Americans were only ten million, they protested in favor of Greece; now that they are a hundred million, they have nothing to say for Belgium.' President Eliot, in his letters to the 'Times' — relentless demonstrations of German premeditation — concluded: 'The Allies must win, and they will.' When his secretary enlisted in the British army, Ambassador Page said: 'If I were your age, I would do the same thing.'

The enlistment depots of our Foreign Legion were besieged by Americans. Their motives? In some cases, the love of adventure; in others, the passion of sacrifice; in all, a curious impulse of head and heart that prompted them to fight in the cause of justice. And it was not life's disinherited, thrown by misfortune into danger. Youths like William Thaw of Pittsburgh, Stewart Castairs of Philadelphia, Kenneth Weeks, Victor Chapman, the two Princes of Boston, E. Mandell Stone, Kiffen Rockwell, left behind them a life of ease to face Alan Seeger's 'rendezvous with death.' Others gave up their life-work and exchanged the scalpel, the pen, or the compass for a rifle. Doctors, like Wheeler of Buffalo, went from the ambulances to the infantry; as did writers, like Seeger and Sweeney; engineers like F. W. Zinn. With them in the ranks were American students from our schools — painters, musicians, architects — rallying to defend 'the sacred hill' which had illumined their youth.

Among them, not a few already discerned what the future held in store for their country. Weeks wrote

to his people at home: 'I am fighting for you.' Alan Seeger, in the 'New Republic,' opened the great debate on the duty of America. His letters, at first passed from hand to hand, then printed in local papers, finally published in the great press, aroused public opinion. German-Americans protested against such 'violations of neutrality.' But others were proud of the volunteers who upheld American honour. The deeds of those soldiers of fortune crystallized pro-Ally feeling. Their families and their friends became centres of attraction. Their death set the seal to unwavering loyalties. 'I was hungry,' wrote the father of Victor Chapman, after the loss of his son, 'to see America, for the good of its soul, take part in this awful struggle between light and darkness.' The apparition of the Lafayette Squadron in the skies of France, its citation in the official *communiqué* of August 12, 1916, raised towards the future eyes that had been riveted to the ground. The hot-heads made cool heads think.

Volunteers, going back to the States on leave, were eagerly listened to, but not always understood. When, despite the protests of the pro-German press, they set forth anew, their return to the front was cheered. Every one felt that theirs was the moral greatness of pioneers. The words of Alan Seeger were on the lips of all. 'They sought neither reward nor glory, nor did they wish to be distinguished from their comrades in blue whose days it was their pride to share until death.' The individual actions of these volunteers prepared the way for collective action. Unknowing, unwilling to know, whether their country would fol-

low them, they threw an imponderable force into the scales of destiny.

Magnificent as was their personal sacrifice and great as the interest it created, what American volunteers did for France involved only individuals. To the American Field Service belongs the honour of having incorporated into the ranks of the French army an American unit commanded by Americans, composed exclusively of American citizens, equipped and paid for by American gold.[1] This again had its inception with a few young men, overtaken in France by the war, who placed themselves and their cars at the service of the wounded. But before long A. Piatt Andrew welded the system into an organic whole. Throughout the United States a wide campaign was launched to create, recruit, and maintain motor ambulances on the French front, as specific units of the French army. Meetings were organized everywhere, Pro-German opposition roared its disapproval. At Butte, Montana, the speakers were hissed. Elsewhere it was necessary to change the place or the time of meetings. The campaign went on. Lawyers cried their scruples; American units, even hospital units, in the French army, were a violation of neutrality. The campaign continued.

In September, 1915, $8000 had been collected, $16,000 in April, 1916, $96,000 in January, 1917. In America, success was assured. But in France? France was an invaded country, full of righteous suspicion.

[1] The campaign for the American Field Service was conducted by Messrs. Sleeper, Robert Bacon, Ed J. de Coppet and his son André, of New York; J. J. Storrow and Major H. L. Higginson of Boston; and in Paris by Mr. H. H. Harjes and Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt.

'Be silent — be cautious.' The military command imposed drastic regulations in the zone of the army. To admit into this zone, closed even to French citizens, not only alongside of the French army, but as part of it, the citizens of a neutral country, of a country divided into two camps where nearly a fifth of the inhabitants were of enemy extraction, where the Government proclaimed its desire not to choose between the belligerents, what a hazard! Even this danger overcome, wiseacres thought it pure folly to risk, with these American units subjected to French discipline, the conflict of their military duties and their national allegiance, a conflict which might lead to appeals from military authority to a foreign embassy. The wiseacres were wrong, and on April 15, 1915, Andrew signed at French General Headquarters a contract of enlistment under which the ambulance personnel, stretcher-bearers and drivers, the outward and visible sign of American support, received a fixed status in the French army in the war zone and became an integral part of that army!

In 1915, there were four sections of twenty cars each. In 1917, there were thirty-four sections with a personnel of two thousand men. As distinct from the volunteers of the Foreign Legion, heroes lost in the mass, these American units attached to French divisions retained their national individuality. They were everywhere on the field of battle, in the valleys of Verdun, on the crest of the Vosges, at the depths of the ravines at Saloniki. In each of these sectors our *poilus* became accustomed to the men in khaki, the forerunners of Pershing's army. They accustomed

French minds to the idea of distant reënforcements which some day would arrive and add themselves to the splendid hospital units, cited for valour nineteen times in two years, while two hundred and fifty of their members won decorations.

Truly a personnel of surpassing merit! 'The very flower of American youth,' as John Masefield, the English poet, called them. Graduates of universities and colleges, heirs of the most famous names in American politics, and letters, and business; united in the determination to assert themselves as Americans in the service of the great cause; determined not to remain idle spectators of the struggle; ambassadors to the front of every State in the Union — their fervour gradually enthused America through and through.

This enthusiasm was so real that the movement kept on growing till it reached its final development. After a trip to the French front, members of one of the most powerful relief bodies, the American Fund for French Wounded, which in 1916 had 150,000 subscribers, and since 1914 had distributed millions of surgical dressings and hospital clothing, asked: 'We work for the army and our work is good, but is it enough? There is the civil population in the war zone, millions of women, of children, of cripples, and of old people, some of whom have found refuge elsewhere in France, others living under the domination of the enemy, who all, when the war is over, will find their homes in ruins. None will need assistance more than they. For this assistance to be efficient and a useful contribution to that most difficult of reconstructions, social reconstruction, we must without

further delay and by our actual presence make a new American effort for the devastated regions, an effort of peace volunteers.'

The idea seemed extravagant. And it was. The war was not over, not anywhere near over. What more dangerous than an anticipation of victory? What more improbable than any long-continued coöperation on French soil between official agencies and a foreign organization? What more dangerous, in the midst of war, than to disperse the forces of a work, already immense, by complicating its task with an additional mission? The French Government opposed the idea. Discussions ensued. But in November, 1916, it was accepted in principle. By January, 1917, a preliminary survey had been made. In the spring it was decided to send out a first unit to break with the routine of impersonally distributed aid, to follow up the armies and by its presence to encourage the civilians delivered from the enemy. It was 'to follow the line of trenches, which, moving towards the French frontier, would gradually liberate invaded territory.'[1]

Nothing needed to alleviate the woes of France escaped our American well-wishers. Sentiments that

[1] The idea of this final effort was first conceived by Mrs. A. M. Dike, during a trip she made to the French front in 1916. She brought back, in addition to the idea, the plans of a 'Maison Sociale' for the devastated regions, designed by a French architect, M. Aubertin, at her request. On her return to the United States the plan received the ardent support of some of the members of the Board of the American Fund for French Wounded. The 'Civilian Section' was formed under the direction of Miss Anne Morgan, Miss Elizabeth Scarborough, Miss Elizabeth Perkins, Mrs. Lewis B. Stillwell, Mrs. Robert Lovett, and Miss May Moulton, and included in its organization Mr. Myron T. Herrick and Mr. Charles A. Coffin.

had stirred the great forefathers at Yorktown revived with all the strength of youth. Aid for the soldiers and aid for the civilians: aid not only for individuals but also for communities; aid against social ills as well as against physical ills. The plans of friendship embraced them all. Volunteers were fighting in our trenches. The Lafayette Squadron was flying overhead. American ambulances were being driven over shelled roads. Gifts were pouring into our hospitals. The reconstruction unit was on its way to France. In our heart of hearts we often asked ourselves whether, had the rôles been reversed, had France been neutral and the United States invaded, we should have done as much for them as they were doing for us. Appreciation of their generosity raised our hopes.

And yet politics continued uninfluenced by sentiment. Thousands of American hearts were flocking to our standard. But the United States remained neutral.

II

Neutrality

America remained neutral — neutral by tradition and neutral by instinct. Tradition harked back for a century and a half. Instinct was prompted by geography, by history, by religion, by interest.

From its very birth the United States was predestined to isolation and neutrality. Morally predestined, because emigration is the result of a desire for isolation, and an evidence that the immigrant takes pride in that desire. Geographically predestined, because, after having been the battlefield of the mother countries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Colonies were determined that the first advantage of their independence should be to relieve them of this rôle. Politically predestined, because in the difficult days of its youth, when the constitutional issue was being fought out between the English party of Hamilton and the French party of Jefferson, any entanglement in European alliance would have split the new-born nation. Economically predestined, because for a century and a half international isolation had spelled prosperity.

From its very birth the United States displayed an almost cynical love of solitude. In 1783, thirsting for liberty, it negotiated with England behind Vergennes's back, despite the great services France had rendered. In 1788, John Jay notified Montmorin that the alliance was at an end, 'its objects,' he said, 'hav-

ing been attained.' In 1793, George Washington proclaimed the neutrality of the United States. Then, as in 1914, France had no lack of friends in America. But non-intervention triumphed none the less. Even in those days the horror of war was a dominant feeling. Madison admitted it, in 1812, when he broke with England; and Lincoln, when he undertook to save the Union. Meanwhile, the expedition which took coveted Texas from Mexico met with inflammatory opposition from Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. The only exception that I know to this horror of war was the conflict with Spain; and even this was regretted by many. To keep out of war at all costs was the essential law, the constant fact. Roosevelt once said, 'A speech in favour of a bigger navy nearly always costs the speaker his seat.'

This rooted horror never lacked protagonists anxious to make it an article of faith. David Trumbull in 1782 said: 'The spirit of the age is against the European system.' Fear of war was added to horror of war; to keep out of war, it was necessary to avoid contact with Europe, where war was chronic and contagious. George Washington, as was his wont, indulged in generalities: 'A nation which gives way to feelings of love or hatred for another nation becomes the slave of its love or hatred.' John Adams was more to the point: 'America has been long enough involved in the wars of Europe. She has been a football between contending nations from the beginning, and it is easy to foresee that France and Great Britain will both endeavour to involve us in their future wars.' Drawing the same conclusions, Thomas Jefferson

summed it up, and in so doing deprived his successors of all claim to originality. 'No country, perhaps,' said Jefferson, 'was ever so thoroughly against war as ours. . . . We shall be more useful as neutrals than as parties'; and on another occasion, 'Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations — entangling alliances with none.'

Unanimous from the very first on the righteousness of isolation, Americans were equally unanimous a hundred years later. Listen to Grant, the Republican: 'The time is not far off when in the natural course of events all political ties between Europe and the continent will have ceased to exist.' And to Richard Olney, the Democrat — whose words William Jennings Bryan repeated in 1915: 'Distance, and three thousand miles of ocean, make all permanent political union between a European and an American state, as impractical as it is unnatural.' Indeed, since 1814, the United States had carefully avoided placing its signature to political treaties, and when concluding any legal or commercial convention, was always careful to insert the formula which appears in the Hague Convention of 1900: 'Nothing contained in this Convention shall be interpreted in a manner to oblige the United States to depart from its traditional policy.' Horror of war, the cause. Horror of entangling alliances, the effect. Neutrality, the result.

This international aloofness asserted itself steadfastly throughout the nineteenth century. Neither the Crimean War, nor the Italian War, nor the Schleswig-Holstein War, nor the Prusso-Austrian

War, nor the Franco-Prussian War, nor the Boer War ruffled its majesty. Proximity to California lent greater interest to the Russo-Japanese War. But Roosevelt did no more than let down the curtain. More recent conflicts in the Balkans and in the Mediterranean left the American people as indifferent as had previous wars. What could be more natural? Think of the life the United States has lived for a hundred years: a life as self-sufficient as self-centred. What mattered the quarrels of other nations to a nation which had built its destiny on a virgin soil? Its business was to continue its wonderful development; to reclaim forest lands; to settle open spaces; its battles were for the winning of the West, which led to the Civil War; for the building of railroads, of industry, of trusts. A single exception, never again attempted, Theodore Roosevelt's intervention in the Algeciras Conference.[1] The United States, like the old men in Faust, looked on at the passing show. The wars of others were none of its concern.

The wars of others were of no concern to the United States, but they made it rich. By keeping out of war, America prospered, and the European conflicts from which she held aloof brought in royal dividends. Thus in the days of the Boulogne camp she bought Louisiana from Bonaparte; Louisiana which was to be the cradle of her greatness. A little later the Continental blockade created the foreign

[1] Popular indifference to foreign questions, even to those of immediate interest to the United States, was complete. Every one agrees that if there had been a plebiscite in 1900 on the Philippines, the majority would have been for immediate evacuation. 'Are they islands or canned goods?' asked a humourist; 'no one knows and no one cares.'

trade of the United States: without it American exports would not have risen from $20,000,000 to $60,000,000 nor its cotton trade have grown from 200,000 pounds to 50,000,000; nor the pay of its sailors have risen from $8 to $24. During the whole nineteenth century, at each Old-World war, the New World scored a point. The Schleswig-Holstein War freed Mexico from the dreams of Napoleon III. The Boer War relieved Venezuela of British attentions. The Moroccan conflict lessened German-American tension. The war with Russia turned Japan away from thoughts of California. These are facts that count, that are of more weight than any hero-worship of Washington or regard for Monroe. As Roosevelt admitted, there is nothing imperative about such regard; the question is merely political. The aim of America: to guarantee to each citizen his life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. And that liberty has remained untouched.

New reasons for safeguarding it were added to the old. Craving for internal peace was added to craving for external peace. Since the Civil War, millions and millions of immigrants had come to swell the American melting-pot. No matter how proud of their new allegiance, they could not but feel, rising unconsciously within them, the moral heritage of their races. The problem which George Washington had solved by neutrality, when he saw an English party and a French party at odds, was a thousand times more pressing when every race in Europe was represented in the inner life of the United States. In every city, in every village, were sons of Ireland, of

Germany, of Italy, of Norway, of Sweden, of Denmark, of Russia, of Poland, of the Levant, and of Asia; to have taken part in the quarrels of the countries of their birth would have been to throw them at each other's throats. Who could deny that the strength of the Union depended upon the casting-off of all ties with Europe? 'The foreign vote,' said a Senator, 'makes it impossible for us to have anything to do with Europe.' After neutrality by economic interest, neutrality by political necessity. The second was as compelling as the first.

To crystallize this conviction it needed only the seal of idealism, that seal which Anglo-Saxons love to set upon what they leave undone as upon what they do. Religious faith supplied it: for does not the Gospel teach, 'Thou shalt not kill'? Their social philosophy, the common effort they had made towards higher standards, the proud optimism of the uprooted, everything that went to make up the American spirit, confirmed the teachings of faith. War hampered human progress! War arrested individual growth! War strengthened despotisms and favoured centralization! War was the lot of old and corrupt nations, with which Americans were proud of having parted. Neither war nor ties with Europe whence wars came: such was the fundamental creed of 120,000,000 human beings. Croly defined it exactly in 1912: 'The notion of American intervention in a European conflict, carrying with it either the chance or the necessity of war, would at present be received with pious horror by the great majority of Americans. Non-interference in European affairs is conceived, not

as a policy dependent upon certain conditions, but as absolute law derived from the Sacred Writings.' The law of neutrality was the fundamental axiom of Americanism.

Turn to the leaders, turn to the people; nowhere from 1914 to 1917 will you find any departure from that tradition. Woodrow Wilson, an American who kept his ear to the ground and was quick to act on what he heard. Nothing could be more American, more thoroughly American, than his neutral preachments. Faced by the risk of war, faced by the responsibility of drawing in his country, he felt the historic hesitation of Washington, of Jefferson, of Madison, of Lincoln. It is a mistake to believe that Wilson was pro-German. Of English extraction, he liked neither Germany, nor its philosophy, nor its morals. His works show that he was a great American, as scornful as Theodore Roosevelt of political mediocrity. From the very first he believed that a German victory would condemn the United States to the militarism it hates. In December, 1915, he said to Brand Whitlock: 'I am heart and soul for the Allies. No decent man, knowing the situation and Germany, could be anything else.' But George Washington also was at heart with the French Revolution and against the coalition of kings, and yet he refused to intervene. Like Washington, Wilson sacrificed his private preferences to his public duty. Lead a peaceful people into war, never — any more than expose to its results national unity as yet unstable.

All through the story of America, I have shown how fragile is the instinct of nationality. From 1914 to

1917, the minds of public men were constantly obsessed by this problem. After having professed his moral allegiance to the cause of the Allies, Woodrow Wilson adds:

> But this is only my own personal opinion and there are many others in this country who do not hold that opinion. In the Middle West and in the West frequently there is no opinion at all. I am not justified in forcing my opinion upon the people of the United States, bringing them into a war which they do not understand.

Not justified. Perhaps also not the strength. For the American people is composite and divided. What would Americans of German birth do, and the Irish-born, the Hungarians, Bulgarians, Turks, etc., if America went in on the side of the Allies?

Hence for thirty-one months the sameness of all official pronouncements. Not to act, not to choose, not to conclude, was a duty towards America and towards mankind. It was the same old policy of Jefferson: 'Effendi,' said the caidji of the Bosphorus, 'if we are to avoid being swamped, we must not move, we must not talk, we must not think.' Such a conception of neutrality was something more than a mere expression of negative policy; it was in the nature of a constructive and reasoned course of action.

> No nation [said Wilson] is fit to sit in judgment upon any other nation. The basis of neutrality is not indifference; it is not self-interest. The basis of neutrality is sympathy for mankind. . . . Neutrality is something so much greater to do than fight.[1]

Against this deep-rooted conviction, facts were of

[1] Address of April 20, 1915.

no avail. Germany sunk the Lusitania. There were men 'too proud to fight.' Germany asserted her will to brutal imperialism: America was not concerned 'with the obscure causes of this war.' In September, 1916, as in August, 1914, was asserted the higher moral virtue of the spirit of neutrality.

> We have been neutral, not only because it was the fixed and traditional policy of the United States to stand aloof from the politics of Europe; but also to serve mankind.[1]

Again in the following December, the last note of the President laid haughty stress upon America's indifference to the war aims of the belligerents; which found a fitting climax in the President's address to the Congress of January 22, 1917, on 'Peace without Victory':

> It must be a peace without victory. . . . Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest not permanently, but only as upon quicksand.[2]

Deeds were made to conform to this doctrine; a deaf ear was turned to all warnings; military preparedness rejected for months because it might lead to some suspicion of hidden purpose; notes in which the blame was nicely apportioned, calling Germany to account for her submarine blockade; calling the Allies to account for their surface blockade. The private man, as revealed by his talks and in his letters, was in

[1] Address of September 2, 1916.
[2] Address of January 22, 1917.

unison with the public man. September, 1914: 'We have nothing to do with war. With its causes and objects we are not concerned'; August, 1915: 'The people rely on me to keep them out of war. Our entry into the war would be a calamity for the whole world. For we should be deprived of all unselfish interest in the final settlement'; January, 1917, less than a month before the breaking-off of diplomatic relations: 'There will be no war. . . . We are the only one of the great white nations that is free from war today and it would be a crime against civilization for us to go in.' Finally, at the very last minute, on the verge of decision, after four sleepless nights, this cry of anguish from his Presbyterian conscience: 'What else can I do? Is there anything else I can do?'

Were the reactions of this man in any way exceptional? No! When, in 1914, Wilson urged 'perfect balance, impartiality of judgment, the most noble self-control,' that is to say, thoroughgoing neutrality in thought and deed, what was the attitude of his great fellow citizen, always hailed by mistaken Europe as the original interventionist? Open the 'Outlook.' It was Theodore Roosevelt who wrote:

> I am sure I am stating your feeling when I say that we will act primarily as Americans; and will work hand in hand with any public man who does all that is possible to see that the United States comes through this crisis unharmed.

Fifteen days passed, and on September 16, 1914, at the White House the President received the Belgian Mission under Carton de Wiart, sent by King Albert to submit the just appeal of his country to the con-

science of America. Woodrow Wilson was courteous and friendly, but excused himself from expressing any opinion on violations of international law. On September 23d, another article by Theodore Roosevelt appeared in the 'Outlook,' approving the official reserve:

> The sympathy we feel (for Belgium) is compatible with full acknowledgment of the unwisdom of our uttering any single word of protest unless we are prepared to make that protest effective; and only the clearest and most urgent national duty would ever justify us in deviating from our rule of neutrality and non-interference.

Even those whose fervent support of the Allies' cause I have praised agreed at first with the President and Roosevelt, despite the attack on Belgium. Walter H. Page, on August 28, 1914:

> What a magnificent spectacle our country presents! We escape murder. We escape brutalization. We will have to settle it. We gain in every way.

And at the same time, Charles W. Eliot, in a letter to Wilson, expressed himself thus:

> Your address to your countrymen on the condition of real neutrality is altogether admirable in both substance and form.

So at the beginning of the war — a beginning which abundantly revealed the nature of the struggle — there was no diversity of opinion. Political America was neutral, proud of being neutral, determined to remain neutral.

Turn to the Senate and House of Representatives where sat the elect of the people: to neutral President,

more neutral Congress. A pacifist and anti-Allied meeting organized by William Randolph Hearst was attended by both Vice-President Marshall and Speaker Champ Clark. The Congress, which took no interest in the war, its causes nor its aims, gave heed only to the harm the war was doing to American shipping. Congress put forward the extraordinary proposal to place German shipping, interned in American ports, under the American flag; Congress clamoured continually against the British blockade; Congress demanded an embargo which, had the President consented, would have been the death-warrant of the Allies; Congress suggested forbidding American citizens to sail on armed merchantmen;[1] Congress, in March, 1917, obstructed the plan to arm all merchant vessels; Congress, from 1914 to 1917, resisted every effort, no matter how timid, made by the Government in favour of military preparedness.

It follows that this unanimous desire for neutrality, far from betraying any leaning towards the Allies, was often directed against them.[2] No one said: 'If war breaks out, it will be against Germany.' What

[1] The anti-English campaign conducted by Senators Stone, Walsh, Hoke Smith, and Hitchcock was at its height. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations was mobilized. Its Chairman, Senator Stone, recommended favourable consideration of the German demand that American citizens should be forbidden to travel on armed liners. There was a panic in the lobbies, and the President had to fight back vigorously. His letter to Senator Stone, in which he refused to abate one iota or tittle of the rights of American citizens, won the day. Twice the Senate voted in his favour, but up to the very last moment the issue was in doubt.

[2] William Jennings Bryan, then Secretary of State, said at the beginning of 1915: 'The ambitions of France alone prolong the war.' A little later he said: 'I congratulate myself that three thousand miles of ocean separate the United States from the blood-drenched field of battle.'

people asked was: 'If war breaks out, whom will it be against?' Again and again the question was raised, whether Wilsonian neutrality was not too favourable to the Allies. From Berlin, James G. Gerard wrote: 'There is no doubt that a real neutrality would stop the sale.' Read the comminatory Notes dispatched from Washington. They were more often addressed to Great Britain than to Germany. Every day the State Department lawyers were furbishing arguments against the British Admiralty. The Declaration of London, the seizures, the prizes, the visits, cotton, copper, ship coal, the blacklists, and censorship of mails furnished the basis of a daily indictment. Each ship stopped on the high seas elicited as many protests as did the sinking of the Lusitania. In more than a hundred cables, Walter H. Page complained that England was treated as the guilty party. 'Our note is not discourteous, but wholly uncourteous, which is far worse. There is nothing in its tone to show that it came from an American to an Englishman; it might have been from a Hottentot to a Fiji-Islander. . . .'[1] The quick-tempered representative of Great Britain, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, burst out in reproaches against a policy which permitted the murder of passengers and attached importance only to cargoes. In moving-picture theatres in London the picture of the President was hissed.

Official circles in Washington made no attempt to hide their irritation. The honest and charming

[1] On January 22, 1915, Sir Edward Grey wrote: 'While Germany deliberately planned a war of pure aggression, the only act on record on the part of the United States is a protest singling out Great Britain, as the only power whose conduct is worthy of reproach.'

Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, wrote in May, 1915:

The English are not behaving very well. . . . Of course the sympathy of the greater part of this country is with them. . . . Their success manifestly depends upon the continuance of the strictest neutrality on our part and yet they are not willing to let us have the rights of a neutral. . . . The most of us are Scotch in our ancestry and yet each day that we meet we boil over somewhat at the foolish manner in which England acts.

In 1916, Wilson said:

I am near the end of my patience. . . . I have at last reached the point where I consider asking Congress to authorize me to prohibit loans and restrict exportations to the Allies. . . . I am concocting a very sharp note to Germany on the submarine.

And to Page, who defended the British Government, the President replied: 'Everybody has lost patience with British stubbornness.' A few weeks later, in November, the Federal Reserve Board, in accordance with the wishes of the Government, asked the banks not to make any further advances to belligerents. The only loans then being negotiated were a French loan with Kühn, Loeb & Company and an English loan with the Morgans. If this decision had been maintained, the defeat of the Allies would have been merely a question of months, as they could neither have supplied their armies nor have fed their peoples.

In the United States, more than anywhere else, the representatives of the people are attentive to the will of the electors. The attitude of the representatives

was, therefore, a primary indication of the will of the people. But there were other indications. The people were neutral, neutral to the very marrow of their bones, and they had their reasons for being so, just as the leaders had theirs. Not only did the people take no interest in distant events which did not affect them, but they were ignorant of those events and incapable of judging them. In the European turmoil, which side was to be believed? Some papers were full of German atrocities; others denied them. Where was the truth? Here German militarism was denounced; there British navalism. The Lusitania was sunk with its innocent passengers; the pro-German press declared that, under cover of these women and children, the great liner was carrying guns and ammunition to England. People remembered the sinking of the Maine, which had been wrongly blamed on Spain and had led to war. They feared a repetition of error. What an excuse for those who were reluctant to decide! And to decide on what? Intervention, mobilization, conscription, everything for which Americans, from childhood, learn to upbraid Europe, and to reject themselves. The diplomatic controversy on the blockade and the submarines irritated the people. But as a whole, as House remarked in June, 1915, 'they desire the President to be firm in his treatment of Germany, but they do not wish to go to such length that war will follow.' [1]

[1] And then there was the prestige Germany had enjoyed since 1848, due to the quality of German immigration, the influence of German professors and writers such as Kuno Meyer, von Mack, Münsterberg, Kühnemann, Burgess, Hoeckel, Hermann Ridder, George Viereck; and the general belief in German victory expressed by Ambassador Gerard in

Besides, here, after analysis which explains, is the fact that proves. I refer to the Presidential election of 1916, an election by which the decision was placed in the hands of the people. Were they divided, at this solemn moment, into adverse camps: one for neutrality, the other for war? No. On one side the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, whose party's slogan was, 'He kept us out of war;' on the other, the Republican candidate, Charles Evans Hughes, who boasted that he was a man of peace and accused his opponent of leading America into war; between the two, Theodore Roosevelt, Progressive candidate, who declined to run and issued an appeal in favour of Hughes, in which there was not a single word about the eventual entry of the United States into the war. The matter is so important that I may be excused for dwelling on it.

Let us look at the Democratic platform. The only direct reference to the war is this sentence:

> The Democratic Administration has throughout the present war scrupulously and successfully held to the old paths of neutrality.

Let us turn to the Republican platform — it is even more pacifist:

> We desire peace, the peace of justice and right, and believe in maintaining a straight and honest neutrality. The Republican Party believes that a firm, consistent, and courageous foreign policy is the best as it is the only true way to preserve our peace. . . . In order to maintain our

February, 1915, or at least in a peace without victory. The hostility of the Irish against England and France, of the Jews against Russia, contributed also to lend public support to official indifference.

peace, the country must have not only adequate, but thorough and complete national defense, ready for any emergency.

Even prior to this wholesale profession of neutrality, Charles Evans Hughes, in his speech accepting the nomination, had asserted his determination to seek nothing but the maintenance of peace, that is to say, neutrality:

> It is a great mistake to say that resoluteness in protecting American rights would have led to war. Rather in that course lay the best assurance of peace. . . . The only danger of war has lain in the weak course of the Administration. . . . We are a peace-loving people. . . . We must safeguard our rights and conserve our peace.

Senator Harding, speaking in the name of the Republican Party, asserted: 'Justice points the way through the safe channel of neutrality.' And Theodore Roosevelt, whatever may have been his private feelings, did not, directly or indirectly, urge the entrance of the United States into the war, in his renunciation of June 22, 1916. He confined himself to regretting that no diplomatic protest had been made against the invasion of Belgium.

So the issue was not, as people in Europe wrongly imagined, between Democratic partisans of non-intervention and Republican partisians of intervention.[1] The issue was between two political parties,

[1] Both parties, Republicans as well as Democrats, had many electors of German origin, and this was an additional reason why both were in favour of neutrality. Two things, however, were noteworthy. President Wilson was the only one to denounce the activities of hyphenated Americans about which Mr. Hughes said nothing. The second was that Hughes had the support of many German-Americans. George Sylvester Viereck in the *Fatherland*, George von Skal, Gustav Mayer, the *Cincinnati Volksblatt*,

each outbidding the other when it came to neutrality. The great debate that Europe believed was going on never took place. There was no such thing as a neutrality candidate opposed to a war candidate. Both parties were in favour of neutrality from the first. They differed only on how best to keep America out of the war. Neither of the candidates discussed the only thing that really mattered. I have in my possession a cartoon printed just before the election. It represents a Democrat asking Charles Evans Hughes: 'Would you have declared war after the invasion of Belgium? Would you have declared war after the Lusitania?' and the caption is: 'Hughes cleared his throat.' No one of the eighteen million electors who voted for Wilson or for Hughes voted for war. Democrats and Republicans had been promised the same thing: a continuation of peace. Democrats and Republicans had answered with a single voice: 'Keep us out of war.'

It may even be added that this decision and the great drama on which it bore occupied an entirely secondary place in the presidential campaign. Our pride-stricken Europe, incurably prone to look upon itself as the centre of the world, believed that the American people had voted for or against it. Nothing could be more false. The problem of neutrality was really a quite insignificant issue. A few lines in the three hundred pages of the Republican campaign

the *Cleveland Wachter und Anzeiger*, the *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, the *Saint Louis Westliche Post*, the *German Daily Gazette*, the *New Yorker Herold*, the Teutonic Sons of America had subscribed to a declaration that 'Justice Hughes's views are in full agreement with German-American ideas of neutrality.'

book, a few pages in the Democratic campaign book, were the only references to it. The only foreign questions dealt with at length in either of these documents were the Mexican problem and the landing of American forces at Vera Cruz in July, 1914. The duty of America in the World War was only cursorily examined, and was lost in the flood of home affairs. Not only did the two great parties profess exactly similar beliefs as to what was the right thing for America to do, but they deliberately placed in the background the great moral issue with which European ignorance conceived them to be engrossed.

But why insist? The legend of a United States revolting against neutrality imposed upon it by its Government, or even of a United States profoundly divided within itself, is utterly disproved by the facts. By tradition, by instinct, by interest, the people as a whole wanted to remain neutral. With the exception of two minorities, one of which prayed for the triumph of Germany, the other for the victory of the Allies, the American people neither desired nor foresaw the great decision of April 2, 1917. For more than two years, the American people and its Government believed that they would be able to keep out of war. They did everything they possibly could to do so.

III

At War

And yet America entered the war. She did what she had not wished to do, and after a few months she did it whole-heartedly. A reversal of policy? Reversals of policy, for nations as for men, are the very fabric of life. A day came when the United States, from humblest citizen to the President, recognized the impossibility of shaping events to its wishes, so it shaped its wishes to events. Of all that has been written to becloud the issue, this one fact only need be retained.

Up to the very last moment, neutrality remained the aim. But, since the autumn of 1916, it had been abundantly clear that neutrality would some day become impossible. Neutrality rested upon the play of diplomatic notes, and diplomatic notes never settled anything. After more than two years of this game, the White House and the State Department found themselves in a blind alley, with only one way out. More or less substantial successes had been obtained by American diplomacy; more or less lasting concessions wrenched at times from England, at times from Germany. But always the necessities of war — necessities of life and death, as Walter H. Page rightly said — had replaced the belligerents in their initial positions: blockade against blockade; cannon against torpedo. In January, 1917, both sides were utterly determined to concede nothing that could interfere with maximum efficiency. The British Ad-

miralty was determined that nothing should get through. The German Admiralty was determined on unrestricted submarine warfare. The tottering tower of American diplomacy was about to collapse.

House had vainly tried to make the belligerents understand the American refusal to 'distinguish between violations of international law.' Neither London nor Berlin admitted this alleged fairness. And if an attempt had been made to force both sides to admit it, a break with both sides would have been the result. To break with every one because unwilling to break with any, such was the paradox to which Wilsonian diplomacy led. To remain logical with itself, it would have had to declare two wars instead of one, as some people jump into the river to keep out of the rain. Robert Lansing frankly admitted it on December 23, 1916, when he told the Washington correspondents: 'Our rights are more and more traversed by the belligerents on both sides. We are getting nearer and nearer the brink of war.' Which war? That was now the only question. Unless the United States wanted two enemies, it had to choose one. Neutrality was admittedly a failure.

Mediation also had been a failure. Unless neutrality could be maintained, an imposed peace was the only way of keeping America out of the war. From the very first Wilson had in mind the rôle that Roosevelt had played in the Russo-Japanese War. It began, in August, 1914, with the Bernstorff-Oscar Straus conversations. It went on right up to the end of 1916 with Colonel House's visits to Europe and the unending series of Wilson Notes. The policy was linked

up with House's pre-war inquiry into the organization of European peace. At the end of 1914, House wrote to Walter H. Page: 'There is a growing impatience in this country and a constant pressure upon the President to use his influence to bring about normal conditions.' In the early months of 1915 and 1916, the President's trusted adviser was busy probing the situation in Europe. After conversations on the freedom of the seas, interrupted by the sinking of the Lusitania, a long exchange of views took place as to the possibility of a conference from which, had failure been due to Germany, the United States would have emerged a belligerent. The second attempt miscarried as had the first.[1] The circular by which the President asked the belligerents to communicate their war aims met with no better success.

It could not have been otherwise, and the unswerving trend of events had made mediation as impossible as neutrality. Mediation was rendered impossible first, because the actions of America, more concerned with results than with methods, more concerned about the conclusion of peace than about the terms of peace, inspired only limited confidence in Europe, and secondly, because the advantage of the proposed bargain, America's entry into the war, was only hypothetical after all. In the margin of the Note outlining the plan for a conference, the President had added the word 'probably' in two places of the phrase relating to American intervention. None of the Allied Governments could venture on to such

[1] 'Everybody seems to want peace, but nobody is willing to concede enough to get it.' (Colonel House's letter.)

shifting ground. For the very reason that he had introduced a supreme reservation in favour of exhausted neutrality into his mediation plan, Woodrow Wilson had killed mediation just as by his notes on the blockade he had killed neutrality. In London and Paris, many accused the President of pro-German leanings. He was simply caught in the logic of his determination to keep out of war. But once again, events more powerful than his will forced him to choose.

Reasons of interest, of security, of psychology, all combined in 1917 to place this choice beyond the realm of doubt. In its earlier phases the war had opposed the economic interests of the Allies and of the United States. The first effect of the war was to deprive America of the great market of Central Europe. The result was a series of crises, stocks falling heavily, copper falling from 16 to 12, pig iron from 17 to 14, oil from 13 to 11. In the second phase, the United States had adjusted itself to conditions and was selling direct to the Allies and indirectly to Central Europe through neutrals. In a third phase, the British blockade had restricted trade with neutrals. But the increasing volume of Allied needs afforded the Americans almost unlimited trade possibilities. Prices had risen enormously. Profits had swollen tenfold. The Allies had become the sole customer of the United States. Loans the Allies had obtained from New York banks swept the gold of Europe into American coffers.

From that time on, whether desired or not, the victory of the Allies became essential to the United

States. The vacillations of Wilson's policy only made this necessity more apparent. The note of the Federal Reserve Board forbidding further loans to the Allies jeopardized American financial interests as much as it did the fate of the Allies. This note, coming too late or too soon, placed buyers and sellers, borrowers and lenders, in equal peril. If, deprived of resources, the Allies lost the war, how could their debts be paid and what would their signature be worth? The carefully weighed policy of the President, permitting sales and stopping credits, worked against neutrality and in favour of a break; it worked against Germany and in favour of the Allies. Between the Allies and the American market a common bond of interest had been created.

To this bond of interest Germany, under the lash of its war aims, added reasons of security no less compelling. Germany managed to bring the war home to America, which had done everything it possibly could to keep as far from the fighting as possible. The great tragedies of the sea, discussed in the President's notes, had not given the Middle West and West the faintest realization of any direct threat of immediate danger. The peaceful voyage of the submarine Deutschland aroused more emotion. And this emotion grew when Germany, by one outrage after another, carried the war on to American soil in a series of attempts, by agents of the German Embassy, against American ports, American railroads, American factories.

Protest had followed protest, all on the same lines and without effect, till the Imperial Government had

grown to believe that words would never be supported by deeds. Speculating on the professional warp in the mind of an intellectual dealing with facts, it had never realized that a day would come when acts would take the place of notes. It had noticed how the long-drawn-out discussion had satiated public interest. But it had failed to see that there was one man who was as much interested as ever, and that man was Woodrow Wilson. Giving ground inch by inch, the President, whether he foresaw it or not, was bound to reach a limit beyond which he could retreat no farther. The announcement that unrestricted submarine warfare was to be resumed, the repudiation of the promises made and the undertakings given less than a year before, left Wilson no choice. Hemmed in by Germany with his own arguments, the prisoner of his conditional threats, Wilson was forced to break instead of to talk. Germany furnished him with the rope which was to hang her.

The failure of neutrality, the failure of mediation, meant war. Under the triple impulse of interest, prudence, and logic, it meant war against Germany. These causes were to work slowly on the haughty apostle of divine neutrality. And yet, as early as 1915, he had admitted possibilities which he had at first refused to consider. 'I should be ashamed,' he said, 'if I had learned nothing in fourteen months.' In 1916, he began his campaign for military preparedness:

> The Country must be fully prepared to care for its own security. . . . There is something more precious than peace; it is the principles on which our political life is

founded. . . . At all times the American people is ready to fight to defend them. . . . There may at any moment come a time when I cannot preserve both the honour and the peace of the United States.

Then another step forward. In the Presidential campaign he had taken the offensive — and he was the only candidate who did — against 'those hyphenated Americans who show more loyalty to a foreign power than to the United States, and pour the poison of felony into the veins of our national life.' To one of them he wrote: 'I would feel deeply mortified to have you or anybody like you vote for me. Since you have access to many disloyal Americans and I have not, I will ask you to convey this message to them.' He was still anxious to remain neutral, but he no longer knew whether he would be able to do so. He confessed: 'My chief puzzle is to determine where patience ceases to be a virtue.' The repeated misgivings of German provocation forced him, in the midst of conscientious throes, to make the great decision. He broke off diplomatic relations.[1] He asked Congress to arm merchantmen. He declared war.

Others before him had trod the same path and conversion torn by scruples is classical in American history. Read the correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in 1812: you will find the same questions and the same answers as in the

[1] Three weeks after the break, a cablegram from the German Government offered Mexico three States of the Union — New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona — as the price of its support. By those few words entrusted to the cable and deciphered by the British Intelligence Service, Foreign Minister Zimmermann did what a hundred and forty years of history had failed to do: he taught the United States what frontiers mean.

correspondence between Woodrow Wilson and Edward Mandell House in 1916. Change the dates, change the names — the situations and feelings are identical, and Wilson on the very eve of making his decision had the right to say that, one hundred and five years later, he was going into war just as his Princeton predecessor had. It seems to be a strange law of American history that all wars should break out under pacifist presidents; that the necessities of foreign policy should be in contradiction to the principles of the nation. After Jefferson, who violated his principles in purchasing Louisiana, after Madison, who went to war after sixteen years of out and out Jeffersonism, Woodrow Wilson, the Democrat, appears in the guise of 'happy warrior,' leading his country to battle after he had sworn to keep it out of war.

From a study of the man, let us turn to the people. At Armageddon, how would these hundred million neutrals take the call to arms and the draft? Their acceptance of both was whole-hearted, less because of circumstances than because of the character of the American people. Doubtless the reasons that had led the President to act were not without influencing a certain number of his fellow citizens: the Middle West suffered from the impossibility of exporting after the breaking-off of diplomatic relations; the South was alarmed by the Mexican danger. But essentially, the masses were once again impelled by their love of doing things, shoulder to shoulder, by their passion for unanimity, which was all the more spontaneous that it was least expected. The extent to which the

people for months had agreed with the President's policy of avoiding war at all costs was the measure of their conviction that a war declared by their President was inevitable. Wilson was followed not from enthusiasm, but by reason. A man of study, too distant ever to be popular, he never swayed the masses. But by the very reason of his slowness to act, which many criticized, his decision to do so inspired confidence. The credit given him for acting was all the greater because this ability to act had been doubted.

Two other causes, connected with the foregoing, hastened the change of front. First, the minority without real political influence which, since 1914, had been working for the Allies, became the moral leaders of the nation in arms. What yesterday was a cause of weakness now became its strength. The volunteers were the vanguard of the army in formation. The relief bodies became lawful centres of attraction, with the unexpected support of Government authority. They were the animators of the new spirit that was rising. For the same reason, the pro-German minority was placed in the repellent position of a negative pole. The immense majority of German-Americans were thus led to give positive proofs of loyalty, which soon was to be tested under fire. The others, whose number was exceedingly small, knew that they were exposed to the penalties of the law. A double displacement of influence had resulted automatically from the declaration of war.

Thus, from one day to the next, with very rare exceptions which could neither be counted nor weighed, a united people rose up to fight. The shortcomings of

Wilson's policy, military unpreparedness, for which he had been rightly blamed — its consequences seen only too late — all made for unity, just as in 1914 the risky withdrawal of our troops ten kilometres behind the frontier had made for unity in France. Public opinion crystallized. Ford closed his peace bureau at The Hague. The masses rushed to war from which for two years they had shrunk. Cabinet Ministers wanted to resign in order to enlist. National cohesion was strengthened by the very shock which might have shattered it. No one challenged Wilson's words: 'Let us act in all matters of general concern as a nation which has a national character to support.' The seven words, 'To make the world safe for democracy,' marvellously adapted to the idealistic impulses of American energy, gave the Nation its slogan. For a few months, its leader was certain of unanimity, the joy of which had been refused to the most illustrious of his predecessors.

In the camp of the Allies, of the Allies who for twenty-four months had been able to carry on the war only by their purchases in the United States, but who since November, 1916, had felt doomed by the impossibility of further borrowing, France was the special object of American fervour — France awoke all the old historical memories so long dulled. On the day of the declaration of war, the British Embassy in Washington received a gentle hint not to put out the British flag for fear of provoking an Irish incident. On the contrary, our Republic, admirably served by the prudent diplomacy of its representative, M. J. J. Jusserand, gathered a rich harvest of affec-

tion. Everywhere Marshal Joffre was greeted with enthusiastic cheers. Pro-French societies were honoured, after their long struggles. America was at war.

America was at war, But what war? Alliance? From the first day the United States insisted that it was not an ally, that it would act only as an associate; that the war aims of the others would not be its war aims; that it would have its own war aims from which nothing should turn it. The United States declared its war, not the Allies' war. 'After all,' House and Walter Lippman had said a few months previously, 'We are not going to get mixed up in the future of Alsace-Lorraine and Constantinople.' This state of mind remained unchanged. In the height of military enthusiasm there was always distrust of European politics. Crusade? Many have believed it in good faith. But facts are against them. Had it been a crusade it would have begun in August, 1914, not in April, 1917. No, the war President Wilson declared on Germany was an American war, American in inception, American in spirit. No, Wilson declared a narrowly national war which, although rivalling the selfishness of Salandra, deserves, for the same reasons, the respect and gratitude of France.

Henceforth the United States and France were engaged in the same task. How would they work together and for how long? That was the question. For more than two years the forces tending to unite them had been underestimated. Now in the day of union were contrary forces to be too lightly held?

CHAPTER IV
RECONSTRUCTION

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I

The Wrath of Attila

In July, 1917, months ahead of the United States army, which was unprepared for war, the Civil Section of the American Committee for French Wounded arrived at the front between Oise and Aisne, where General Pétain had assigned it to the village of Blérancourt.[1] Only three months previously the sector entrusted to the Civil Section for succour had been evacuated by the Kaiser's troops in their strategic retreat of March. No better vantage-point existed to gage the results of invasion and German efficiency.

From inhabitants left among the ruins the American women learned the story of their long martyrdom. One day in August, 1914, from Saint-Aubain to Tergnier guns had roared, so near that doors rattled and windows shook. The people were told that it was artillery practice. The next day the Germans came.

Their haste to advance made them unrelenting. Every French soldier found behind their lines was shot, as was every civilian suspected of having lent him aid. At Blérancourt, shots fired by our retreating soldiers were blamed on the inhabitants. The village

[1] The Civil Section of the American Fund for French Wounded embarked on May 18 at New York for Bordeaux. It was composed of Mrs. A. M. Dike, Miss Anne Morgan, the Misses Allen, Dolan, Duer, Stevenson, Blagden, and Wright.

was held for a whole night under a threat of general massacre. Five houses were drenched with gasoline and burnt. In the streets what men were left, their suspenders and pants buttons cut, were held at rifle's length. In the cellars the women and children, locked in, awaited suffocation.

After the Marne the enemy took root. Clausewitz had long ago laid down the principle: 'The right of requisition of an occupying army has no other limitation than the impoverishment, exhaustion, and destruction of the country.' General von Heeringen, who commanded at Laon, showed himself a worthy disciple. 'War,' he wrote, 'must be waged cruelly. The people must feel its full weight.' In each village, a *Kommandantur*, under the orders of an officer or a non-commissioned officer, enforced orders inspired by the principle. Buildings were seized, all resources in money and kind requisitioned, and the people enslaved beneath a yoke of iron. Several million Belgian and French people lived, some three years, others four years and a half, in this Hell. The American women, just landed, had never imagined any such intensity of suffering. But as the inhabitants told their story, they listened.

They heard the story of the utter spoliation of a people. All money had been taken. Without making any allowance for the absence of man power or the impossibility of producing wealth, the fiscal officers of the German army exacted the payment of all taxes due to the French Government, leaving no part thereof for the administration of the territory or for the upkeep of public services. When money disap-

peared, the mayors were ordered to issue municipal currency and enforce its circulation. When nothing more could be obtained by this method, currency was issued, as security for which both individuals and municipalities had to pledge all assets in their possession or in banks. Later a central bank was created at Maubeuge from which municipalities were obliged to borrow in order to pay the taxes, to say nothing of the fines imposed. As early as the end of 1915, no private, no public resources of any kind remained in occupied France. Everything had been drained. Ruin was the common lot of all.

The hand of unbending authority had been stretched out over persons, as over things. Did a German officer pass, he had to be saluted. Did a German private present himself, even without a regular billet, he had to be taken in. Twice a day, roll call; after certain hours, a stringent curfew. Fatigue party after fatigue party. Enforced labour for all youths and for men under sixty. The commune of Chauny fined because a civilian had been absent from the daily inspection; the commune of Coucy fined because an inhabitant had spoken to a Russian prisoner; the city of Laon fined because a French aeroplane had dropped three bombs on the station. Such was the daily meed. Then came evacuation. First, all men considered capable of doing military service; next, labourers needed for special work; finally, suspects and the ungovernables, sent off either in groups, or one by one, to a fate the mystery of which was tragic.

At an early date famine threatened. The Germans carried off the wheat and hay and straw and horses

and cattle in September. In October, they seized all food supplies. The hospital of Laon, and those of Blérancourt and Chauny, were pillaged. There was nothing left to buy. The more fortunate grew what they could in their gardens when enforced labour left them time to do so. But at night the soldiers dug the potatoes or stole the rabbits. In February, 1915, General von Heeringen reduced the daily rations to one hundred and forty grams of bread and forty grams of meat. Nothing could be had at any butcher shop. But for the offal thrown away by the military kitchens and a few purchases in German canteens, the people would have starved to death before the end of the first year.

Salvation came from the Committee for Relief organized by Mr. Hoover. Formed in 1915, this Committee had merely contemplated bringing, by private gifts, some extra comforts to inhabitants which it believed were being fed by the occupants according to the laws of war. As soon as it was started, the Committee found itself feeding, and obliged single-handed to feed, seven and a half million Belgians and two and a half million French, from whom Germany had taken everything and to whom she refused to give anything. Financed thereafter by the Allied Governments, the Committee for Relief built up a splendid organization. In the sector between Oise and Aisne, its first flour train arrived in May, 1915. The bread ration, first fixed at two hundred and seventy grams, was increased the following year to three hundred and forty grams. Foodstuffs were thus distributed

in this region to the value of more than ten million francs.[1] Later clothing was distributed to the people, many of whom were wearing coats made of ticking, dresses cut out of bed linen, overcoats made from threadbare blankets, and shoes lined with sacking.

The morale of the people was low. The bravest were silent and waited. Others gave way. Shameful mutterings and tale-carryings prompted a German officer to say, 'We really have no need of police.' One felt, too, that the enemy was growing weary. The resplendent German army of 1914 had become sordid. Underfed horses, fewer automobiles, shorter rations, all told of increasing difficulties. And then came the reign of '*Ersatz*.' *Ersatz* foodstuffs, *ersatz* supplies, *ersatz* war material. Yet the front remained unchanged. The French held; but so did the Germans. They seemed rooted for all eternity. At Blérancourt, the Duke of Mecklenburg and his suite organized their hunting parties six months in advance. At Quierzy, German archæologists in *feldgrau* rifled the soil for vestiges of Charlemagne to bolster the historic claims of the German Empire over France.

Suddenly, in the middle of February, 1917, there came a change. In each village — on the 14th at Saint-Aubin, the 16th at Guny, the 18th at Saint-Paul-au-Bois, a little later at Trosly-Loire — an order of the *Kommandantur* brought the whole population to the market square, the school, or the church; the roll

[1] Distribution was carried out in the communes by local committees presided over by Mr. Ermant, Senator, assisted by Messrs. Dessary, Michaux, Gilbert, and Blondet.

was called, and whoever was neither infirm nor old nor impotent was made to step out. The rule was to take everybody from sixteen to sixty. They were told to make ready to go. They went, always too slowly to please their escort, hurried forward with rifle butts or bayonets, like the Curé of Saint-Aubin, who insisted on walking at the pace of the oldest at the end of his column so as to abandon none. Some were sent to the Ardennes, others to the North, others to Belgium. Those who remained — the infirm and old and the very young — were concentrated in two or three villages, and shut up in churches or in factories. At the doors armed sentinels stood guard.

Then the German engineers made ready all things for the strategic retreat ordered by Quarter-Master-General Erich von Ludendorff. They sawed down all the fruit trees, robbing the villages of their verdant crowns. Then in every farm every agricultural implement, even to a spade or a rake, was gathered up, heaped in a pile, broken, and burned. All was made ready for the final act, carried out with scientific efficiency. In every commune the houses, bridges, and cross-roads were mined with high explosives, connected to central batteries. One morning in March the sentinels told their prisoners, 'It is for to-morrow.'

The next morning at *H* hour, everything was blown to pieces. During the next three days more than three fourths of all the villages between Soissons and Laon were destroyed with high explosives, one after the other. In places where the pitiful remainder of the population had been concentrated, or when time was lacking, the destruction was only partial. At

Blérancourt only sixty houses were burnt, but the best were set on fire, the soldiers shouting, '*Kapitalisten Kaput.*' Three or four churches were spared, thanks to the efforts of German doctors or chaplains. When it was all over, the doors were opened to the unfortunates whom the enemy intended to leave on this murdered land. Stunned and bewildered, they were driven by their tormentors among the still smoking ruins. Germany wanted a desert behind her: she had made it. A few hours later, our Thirty-Third Corps and General Féraud's cavalry entered the villages to the west of the Ailette and along shell-torn roads followed the enemy up the right bank.

The people who were to live amid these ruins had but little in common with that splendid race, the glory and glamour of whose history I have sought to depict.[1] Those who remained after the German retreat were living rubble, formless and helpless, bowed down and passive; our soldiers fed them as one feeds the sick. The Germans, by reverse selection, had left behind only the senile and the paralyzed, the halt, the lame, and the blind, the deaf and dumb, the hunchbacks and the cripples. Those who had fled in 1914 to the South of France, those who, evacuated by the enemy in 1914 to 1917, came back from Germany through Switzerland, were scarcely any better. They had been told that their villages had been liberated. They had set out for them at once, and, arriving at a turn of the road, had looked upon what had once been their homes: the houses, heaps of stones, the fields, chaos. No shelter beyond holes covered with a few

[1] See above, Chapter II.

planks; no tools, no implements. Even the soil was gone. The return had been full of the glad anticipation of victory; the arrival spelled blank despair.

To understand what followed, one must fathom the depth of their misery. Remember the total impossibility of finding shelter, of satisfying the major instincts of mankind. Furniture, doors, windows, roofs, walls, all had disappeared. To get on their feet they needed money, but of money there was none. All their earnings came from the soil; and the soil was dead. Their small fortunes, saved up bit by bit, were gone. Doubtless the French Government was there, but it was far off and out of reach. Besides, in 1917, the law on war damages had not yet been voted and the system of advances was just beginning to function. In the confusion of the German retreat and the general mixing-up of the population, it was not without difficulty that financial assistance reached those for whom it was intended. Many received nothing. Many were paid once or twice, and then all trace of them was lost. And here we touch upon the second characteristic of this returning population: it was composed exclusively of paupers. These splendid workers, who had never begged anything of any one, were obliged to rely on others for the necessaries of life. A secular tradition of labour had given way to a mental complex of dependence. Want had killed courage.

Besides, these men, yoked by centuries to the same patch of land, were now uprooted for the first time. The German system of massing the inhabitants of the destroyed villages in a few communes had done this.

No one was in his own home, nor even in his own village. Even family ties were lacking, for families were scattered. In August, 1914, the general mobilization had taken all men capable of bearing arms. Among those who were not mobilized, some had fled three weeks later and sought refuge somewhere in France; the others had been carried off by the enemy. The internment of boys, one of the first steps of German occupation, the requisitions of labour, the penal evacuations, and finally the wholesale evacuation of the entire valid population in February and March, 1917, had broken down the cells of social structure. An inhabitant of Blérancourt, fifty-six years old, had ten children living. One of his sons was a soldier. Another, wounded and amputated, was in a Paris hospital. Three others — two daughters of thirty-one and nineteen, and a son of sixteen — had been carried off into Germany. At Blérancourt there remained four children under eleven, as well as a crippled son and his wife. Such instances were by no means uncommon.

So much for the present. But to judge the future, look at the children. They had grown up without milk, in cellars, fed more often than not only on black bread and water. Their emaciated bodies told the story of their privations. They were bent by rickets. Their eyes, too big, shone in their sallow faces. Their arms and legs were without trace of muscle. Immediately after the German retreat from Selens, a young girl had gathered some of them in an open barn. She tried to conduct classes. How could she, without books, without blackboard, without paper, without

pens, without anything? Wrapped in worn-out blankets, the children shivered in the cold, rainy spring. Wizened, like little old men, their eyes held the look of death.

And yet, amid these sinister surroundings, lacking in all the essentials of life, there came from out of the depths of these ruins a mysterious quickening, annunciative of the rebirth of life and labour. Women, bent with age, began to wash, to sew, to cook for the soldiers. Men gathered themselves together for reconstruction. A refugee from La Fère became schoolmaster at Blérancourt. Elsewhere the foreman of a factory acted as secretary of a municipality. Others began to clear the ruins from what had once been their gardens. Improvised municipalities employed those able to work, and sought to restore some semblance of civic order out of the chaos of destruction. If the village could be re-formed, if the soil could once more be made to give itself to the race, stabilization would ensue. For was not the soil the very soul of the village? Wounded, tangled with barbed wire, it awaited its own, those who for centuries had served it. Rather scratch it with their nails, like savages, than abandon it anew.

In the depths of such distress, incredulity was natural when eighteen foreign women arrived and announced that they were going to stay and help the people reconstruct. When, with the aid of soldiers from the cavalry corps, they put up their barracks, warehouses, and dispensary amid the ruins of the old château, the Picard peasants, accustomed to walls of stone, ran their hands over the wooden partitions with

undisguised doubt. Six weeks later, ten families from Saint-Paul-aux-Bois arrived at Blérancourt and asked to be allowed to sign papers giving them the right to wooden dwellings. The American unit acted as go-between with the administration, Féraud's cavalrymen put up the shacks, and the result was soon apparent. By March, 1918, eight hundred families had homes, furnished after a fashion, and received their food supplies three times a week from American trucks. On the ground cases piled up, bearing unknown names — Denver, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles — which read like promises of help. The automobile restored circulation to this desert. The rebirth of business announced the rebirth of life. Materially and morally, the beginning was good.

But this beginning, dictated by circumstances, was not the aim, and other duties pressed. First the children, whose health brooked no delay. So a dairy was opened at Blérancourt with Jersey cows, brought from Caen, and of an evening by moonlight its doors were besieged by mothers touched once more by the wand of hope. At the end of 1917, the children of twenty-two villages gathered around a Christmas-tree which gave them their first vision of peace.

There remained the men, for whom all was dead while the soil was dead. Left to themselves, they were powerless to bring it to life. Soldiers gave what fraternal help they could, but it was not enough. The prefect had funds for advances, but they were not to exceed one fifth of the loss, so that where the holding and all the agricultural implements and tools neces-

sary for its cultivation were utterly destroyed, the aid of the State was less by eighty per cent than the loss sustained. But even had this aid been equal to the loss, individual effort would have remained ineffective. Nearly all the tillers of the soil were gone: dead, mobilized, or carried off as prisoners. If only the remaining few had worked, the result would have been insignificant and mechanical cultivation, made imperative by the condition of the soil, impossible. It was essential that all the holdings be treated as a unit and the total available forces applied to its restoration. Four months later this result was achieved. An agricultural coöperative was formed. The soil began to come to life again; and hope returned.

The mainspring of this rebirth was the tiny Blérancourt office with its trained nurses, its women truck drivers, its lying-in hospital, its *crèche*, its classes in household science, its warehouses and its card indexes: a centre of material help and moral support. Personal contacts were established which were to be the human framework of a common endeavour. Each inhabitant, man or woman, young or old, was the object of personal observation. Each was weighed morally to know what share he or she could bear of the burden of reconstruction. There was an actual and thorough blending of American initiative and French virtues. Methods of interpenetration were standardized so as, with increased means, to cope with greater needs. If the front moved forward, as was hoped, the work could be pushed on behind it, applying tried methods to fresh areas. The sight of our new regiments of artillery upon the roads and of our great squadrons of

aeroplanes in the skies gave promise of widened responsibilities following triumphant morrows.[1]

The fate of battle decided otherwise, and twice in 1918 the effort was blasted by defeat. This crisis, which lasted nine months, began in March, 1918. On the morrow of Caporetto, the Interallied Supreme War Council decided to put off any further offensive on the Western Front until the arrival of the American army. Against two hundred German divisions, we could then put in the field only one hundred and seventy. Ludendorff determined to take advantage of this and to force the issue. The blow fell on March 21st, in the valley of the Oise, where the French and English lines met at Barisis, hard by Coucy-le-Château, on the road from Soissons to Laon. The English had expected it would fall in Flanders. After stealthy concentrations by night, aided by every refinement of *camouflage*, there came a few shots to find the range and then a deluge of gas shells. The Germans broke through the Gough army. Into the gap General Pétain threw French division after French division, brought up in trucks at breakneck speed. But quick as was the counter-thrust, the Germans

[1] This entirely unprecedented effort aroused the utmost interest in France. The Government, the military authorities, the Société d'Agriculture de France, which awarded its silver medal to the American Committee, closely followed its activity. The comptroller of food supplies of Great Britain sent over one of his assistants to help. The American Committee, under Mrs. A. M. Dike and Miss Anne Morgan, was then as follows: Information and distribution, Miss Stevenson, Miss Peyton; warehouses, Miss Duehr, Miss Folke, Miss Watson; automobiles, Miss Blagden, Miss Allen, Miss Dolan, Miss Moore, Miss Turner; schools, Miss Hickel, Mlle. Dumont, Mlle. Charpentier; dispensary, Miss Wright, Miss Toorey; medical service, Dr. Tallant, Dr. Kelly; dairy, Miss Taylor; secretariat, Mrs. Needham, Miss Winslow.

were quicker, and on the 25th they reached Noyon. On the 23d, Big Bertha began shelling Paris. Thousands of Parisians blocked the railroad stations. By the 27th, the flood of refugees, driven from between the Oise and the Aisne, was flowing to the South.

To receive them, not even French soldiers — who would have given moral support — but English troops who did not understand a word they said. At Chauny, Marizelle, Dampcourt, Bichancourt, all along the Oise, amazement gave place to terror. The women-folk flocked to Blérancourt asking, 'Where shall we go?' On the 22d, the General Staff ordered trucks to be held in readiness and the children to be placed in safety. At each lull in the firing, the old folks sought to return to their homes to save some of their effects. On Sunday, the 24th, the prefect of the Aisne brought the order to leave in the night. On Monday morning, the refugees arrived at Vic-sur-Aisne and at Soissons. Everywhere was an inextricable jumble of people, domestic animals, and goods, children seeking their mothers, mothers seeking their children, old people asking for a train, British soldiers, the remnants of a routed army, French soldiers trying to make their way to the front. Not a trace of civil administration remained. Alone the tax-collector of Blérancourt, M. Héricault, standing in a lorry, was distributing a whole month's advance to each refugee. The American Unit did wonders to guide this retreat. Driven from its field of action by battle, it was at the same moment deprived of its American base by the dislocation of the war relief organization to which it belonged. The French Government

suggested that the American Committee move to Alsace where the front was quieter. It refused. In retreat as in action it wanted to be with the Picards who were near to its heart. 'The peasants,' it answered, 'are with us. Work will soon begin again, and we shall be able to grow wheat.'

On May 27th, the front flamed forth anew. On that day, the enemy in enormous waves swamped the Chemin des Dames, crossed the Aisne, and pushed on towards the Marne. Taking advantage of the Allied concentration north of the Oise, in the section recently threatened, to prepare an attack between Rheims and Noyon, they made a last desperate effort to end the war before the arrival of the Americans, who were being landed at the rate of 300,000 a month. Sixty German divisions between Berry-au-Bac and the Soissons–Laon road overwhelmed eleven Allied divisions. Neither on the Aisne nor on the Vesle could the advance be stopped, and it reached the line of the Marne. The whole American zone of restoration was once more in the hands of the enemy or under fire.

From June 5th to June 15th, the three German armies of von Boehm, von Hoffmann and von François kept up their assaults. With the exception of Vic-sur-Aisne and twenty-three communes, the whole Department of the Aisne was soon reoccupied by the enemy. The American centre of Vic-sur-Aisne was on the front line. Farther to the south, the Château of Coyolle was under fire. The station at Villers-Cotterets was destroyed by bombing planes. The children, evacuated by miracle, were sent to Paris, and the American Unit could devote all its efforts to a hasty

evacuation of the Soissonnais villages. Communications by road became impossible. It took the Vice-President of the American Committee twelve hours over roads, blocked by troops, transport, and refugees, to cover the eighteen miles from Vic-sur-Aisne to Château-Thierry, where the prefect lived. Day by day the movements of the army brought about changes in military organization, and soon the Committee had to rely exclusively on its own resources.

Henceforth the social workers were in the hands of Fate, following the fortunes of the army and serving as and where circumstances dictated. From Paris they sent their colony of children to Normandy. From Paris, with two advanced posts at Changis and Vield-Maisons, they sent their trucks to feed the twenty-four villages of the Aisne as yet unoccupied by the enemy. From Paris they kept in touch with some two thousand families of refugees, scattered over France, who turned to their headquarters for information and help.

Meanwhile, between Paris and the front military services which no one had foreseen were spontaneously growing up. American women volunteers who had come to do works of peace, gave themselves up wholeheartedly to war. Some nursed the wounded; others in canteens, stationary or mobile, served coffee and chocolate to 200,000 French, English, and American soldiers. Grizzled *poilus*, once they had tasted of these welcome halts, asked on the road, 'Où sont les dames?' Here American hearts beat in unison with French hearts. Rural friendship had developed into a comradeship of arms. Day by day, a wealth of mu-

tual comprehension was amassed at dusty halts. Hearts that had shared the same trials needed no interpreters to understand one another.

And now the dawn of victory. Held in the enormous pocket it had made from the Chemin des Dames to the Marne, the enemy was caught as in a trap. Their supplies threatened, the Germans could no longer attack; and yet attack they must, for their position was untenable and every day their numerical superiority was decreasing. Their army was suffering from a transport crisis. Austria, beaten on the Piave, was clamouring for peace. Hence the attack of July 15th in Champagne. Once this attack was broken, the initiative passed to the Allies. On the 18th, their counter-attack was launched and made lightning progress. Château-Thierry was retaken on July 21st, Soissons on August 2d, and from August 20th to September 6th the whole region between the Oise and the Aisne was reconquered. Tartiers, Lombray, Blérancourdelle, Le Mont de Choisy, Cuts, Blérancourt, Quierzy, Juvigny, Cuffies, Pasly, Guny, Noyon, Marizelle, Pierremande, Autreville, Folembray, Coucy-le-Château, Coucy-la-Ville, Neuville-sur-Margival, Margival, Laffaux, Vregny, Chavigny, Leuilly, Chauny, Barisis were all cleared of the enemy by the joint attack of French and American divisions.

As these familiar names appeared in the list of villages liberated, the American women pushed forward to their initial base at Blérancourt with canteens, dispensaries, and the hospital unit given to the American Committee for Devastated France by

the American Women's Hospital Association. They arrived at Château-Thierry and established themselves in the rue de la République, still echoing with the shouts of American Marines pursuing the Germans to the Marne. Then they pushed forward again, marching north behind the army which, as it advanced, left behind it zones empty of troops in which the civilian population was abandoned to its own resources. More than two hundred villages had to rely on American lorries for the possibility of existence. For three months these rolling stores, carrying condensed milk, sugar, rice, canned goods, clothes, boots, kitchen utensils, etc., were the hope of the returning population again established among their ruins. Each month they pushed a little farther to the north and the stationary depots followed them: Changis in June, Château-Thierry in July, Vic-sur-Aisne in September, Laon in October. French bureaucracy, so loath to relinquish its prerogatives, delegated its powers to these foreign women to inventory the plain of Laon and cope with its immediate needs. Yet the final aim was never lost sight of. As soon as a returning refugee asked for tools, they were given to him. What would it have availed to maintain life if not to give rebirth to the soil and attach man to its furrows?

After the celebration of the Armistice, at the outposts as in the farms behind the front, Blérancourt was opened up again and once more set to work. In this sinister region there was nothing of the intoxication of victory; but, if intoxication was lacking, determination was not. In the shattered villages were funerals, marriages, and baptisms. Every day from

all corners of France newcomers returned. A few planks, some tarred paper, beds, chairs, and tables were enough to enable them to live through the winter. The spring was to find them ready for the tasks of peace.[1]

[1] This is the citation in army orders (Croix de Guerre with palm) read to the troops on September 13, 1918, at Château-Thierry, when Mrs. A. M. Dike and Miss Morgan were decorated by General Degoutte: 'For more than a year has worked with intelligent zeal and admirable devotion to recreate French homes devastated by the enemy in the reconquered part of the Department of the Aisne. Obliged, as a result of the fighting at the end of March and at the end of May, 1918, to leave the villages which the enemy was about again to destroy, fell back only at the last moment and always under the fire of the enemy. During all this period has lent the most courageous and active assistance to the military and civil authorities, aiding them in the evacuation of populations harassed a second time, harbouring the children, directing the transport of numerous French wounded under violent shell fire, assuring the feeding of isolated troops by mobile canteens. Since our offensive of July, has helped the inhabitants returning to the liberated regions of the Aisne to remake their homes, supplying them with the means of living in them, and has continued to direct the mobile canteens in the most exposed parts of the army zone, distributing comforts to the wounded and to soldiers coming out of line. Has thus greatly contributed to maintaining the very high morale of the population of the Department of the Aisne and of the combatants of the Sixth Army.'

The other members of the American Committee for Devastated France who at that time received military or civil awards are: Misses Miriam Blagden, Barbara Allen, Rose Dolan, Muriel Valentine, Mrs. Richard Heveno, Drs. Alice W. Tallant and Maude Kelly (Croix de Guerre with star), Mrs. Conrad Lehr and Miss Helen V. Latrobe (Médaille d'Honneur of the Sanitary Service).

II

The Sores of Reconstruction

Struggles of peace, greater even than those of war: for the war over, bonds slackened and water became thicker than blood. Obstacles hitherto undreamed of emerged from the mists of hope: first in France, then in the United States. In France they were the result of surroundings and of the times. Very few Americans discerned them. Hence the Great Misunderstanding.

The reconstruction of France did not appear to offer the slightest opportunity for outside intervention. Both our laws and our policy made it inconceivable. Our laws? The French Chamber and Senate had dealt with the matter in the abstract. They had evolved a charter of reconstruction very much as they would have drafted a political constitution. All foreign participation, whether material or moral, was banished from this narrowly national programme. Outside of Germany, liable for the reparation of the damage she had wrought, the French Reconstruction Act of April 17, 1919, contemplated only two parties to reconstruction: the Government and the victims. Our policy? Americans had said, 'We will help France to rebuild; our industry will aid reconstruction.' President Wilson's Secretary of the Treasury had promised me to obtain from Congress the credits necessary to finance America's participation in the reconstruction of our devastated regions.

But French ministers responsible for our economic policy would hear nothing of it.

The war over, our factories, which for five long years had lived on war; suddenly found themselves without orders. Every one feared lockouts, unemployment, social unrest. Reconstruction was a panacea for all these evils. Lloyd George once said to me, 'France is lucky to have ten devastated Departments.' Without indulging their humour to this extent, my French colleagues were anything but anxious to see foreigners get the orders they relied upon to provide in times of peace a steady flow of work for our factories. American credits to be spent in America? American corporations rebuilding our destroyed cities? France preferred to rebuild on a strict protection basis without any aid from abroad because aid meant competition.

Reconstruction was indeed a stupendous undertaking and one for which no precedent existed. From the sea to the Vosges war had cut a wide swath of death and desolation. The mind reels before figures which seek to express the magnitude of the cataclysm; but even figures cannot convey all the horror of it, for beneath the ruins of things there seethed an uncertain world of sorrows and hopes and aspirations, a living and suffering people whose nerves were on edge. Ruin was fourfold: that of battle accumulated during fifty-two months of constant fighting, that of economic destruction inflicted by the German General Staff on all industrial plants, that of strategic efficiency stamped upon the face of the territory evacuated by Hindenburg in 1917, that of the final

rout piled up haphazard by the last three months of war. Ruin thus heaped upon ruin formed a seemingly insurmountable barrier to human effort.[1]

To the restoration of this chaos[2] the effort of the Government was directed by the law of 1919 which laid upon it an unparalleled task; unparalleled in principle, for never had any government undertaken after a war to make good all damage sustained by private citizens; unparalleled in magnitude, for never had destruction been wrought with such thoroughness and perfection. Solely responsible — German reparations being due to it and not to the victims — the French Government had to make good three

[1] Of its 207,000 square miles France had to reconstruct something less than twenty thousand, half of which was arable land. When she regained possession of this territory, it was pitted with shell holes and seared with trenches, to excavate which three hundred million square yards of earth had been moved; entangled with millions of miles of barbed wire, covered with fifty million cubic yards of débris which once had been prosperous towns and smiling villages. The springs of agricultural, industrial, and commercial life were broken. There were no roads — 32,500 miles of highway had been destroyed; there were no railroads — 4000 miles of track had been obliterated; there were no factories — 20,000 had been destroyed; there was no live stock — 1,400,000 head had been carried off. This zone, the richest in France, representing less than ten per cent of her area, paid nearly twenty per cent of her pre-war taxes and supported a teeming population of 4,500,000 inhabitants. Nearly two thirds of these, 2,732,000, had been driven from their homes. The remainder, 1,944,000, had lived for four years and a half under a foreign yoke, and been subjected to forced labour, deportation, and famine. No shelter existed either for those who had remained or for those who came back. More than 4000 towns and villages had been destroyed by war; in one third of them the destruction was total — it amounted to one hundred per cent; in one third the destruction exceeded fifty per cent, and in the remaining third the havoc wrought was less. The number of houses struck by shell fire was 594,000; of these more than half, 304,000, had been utterly destroyed. In 3256 communes all trace of municipal life had entirely disappeared.

[2] 'Suppose England were deprived of Lancashire by an earthquake: then you will understand what the ruins of war and German destruction mean to France.' (Speech of Lord Derby at Liverpool, 1919.)

kinds of damage: damage to real estate, damage of moveables, and loss by enemy requisitions. The Government alone, under the law, was responsible for financing reconstruction. The Government alone by the very nature of things had to assume the responsibility for planning and carrying out reconstruction. For in this desolated and ruined land, deprived of all communication with the outside world, private effort was powerless.

Groping its way and with many a *faux pas*, the heavy machinery of Government, no-wise fitted for the task, gradually set itself in motion. Reconstruction changed hands not infrequently. In 1915, the Ministry of Public Works was responsible; in 1917, the Ministry of Blockade and of Liberated Regions; from 1918 to 1920, the Ministries of Liberated Regions and of Industrial Reconstruction both had a finger in the pie. From 1920 to 1925, the Ministry of Liberated Regions was alone responsible. Thereafter reconstruction was in the hands of the Ministry of Finance. In the devastated regions themselves the same changes of responsibility were complicated by division of authority between prefects, secretaries general of reconstruction, directors general of technical departments: Department of Finance, Legal Department, Department of Administration, Architectural Department, Department of Agriculture, Industrial Department, Department of Statistics, Surveying Department, Department of Accounts — such were, to mention only a few, some of the aspects of this stupendous undertaking. For the actual work of reconstruction everything had to be

created. Hundreds of thousands of labourers, foremen, and engineers had to be recruited, transported over tattered roads, sheltered and fed without local resources, and supplied with tools and materials brought from afar.

That the Government did. Badly? So it is said. But who could have done it well? The early contracts were expensive, far above regular prices; but there was no basis of comparison for this herculean labour. Methods varied, but so did needs. All in all, the Government within a few months rid the soil of live shells and barbed wire, filled in the trenches, reduced chaos to some semblance of order. At the same time it made shift to repair what could be repaired; it built shelters of corrugated iron by the thousand, wooden barracks and temporary dwellings in which for years the people lived, in awful conditions, it is true, but without which they could not have lived at all. Thus gradually, after a period during which the Government did all the work, an era of private endeavour dawned when contractors worked for the victims of invasion and under their direction, and the Government paid. At first, the sole medium of reconstruction, the French Government was henceforth merely to finance it.

Then there arose the problem of prices, a problem of surpassing difficulty which foreign observers have utterly failed to grasp because, not being on the spot, they lacked all knowledge of its essential elements. As soon as the railroads began running again, as soon as the roads became passable, the 300,000 rough shelters which had been run up permitted a general

return to the war zone, and then, as if drawn in by a great current of air, there was an immediate congestion of transport, of building material, of labour, of capital. Some idea of that congestion may be gathered from the fact that with the public works equipment of pre-war France it would have taken fifty years or more at normal pressure to rebuild the devastated regions. In pre-war times the total amount of public building done in a year never amounted to more than a billion francs, and the building to be done in the devastated regions was estimated in 1919 at some twenty-six gold billions. So reconstruction was to be an artificial and exceptional undertaking. As in a virgin land, everything had to be imported: stones, wood, bricks, mortar, cement, and labour.

A rise in prices, sudden and uncontrollable, was the result. Conditions were such that a building worth 100,000 francs in 1914, cost two, three, four, or five times as much to rebuild. This increase in cost varied according to places, to ease of access, to existing demand, etc. It was also affected by an entirely different and outside cause: the fall of the franc. So the cost of reconstruction was not always nor everywhere the same. In order to ascertain it, the 1914 value had to be multiplied by an ever-varying coefficient which changed according to place, according to time, according to the work to be done. Hence endless discussions about the two values and the two prices: the 1914 value and the cost of reconstruction; the actual loss sustained and the cost of replacement. Only those who have actually had to deal with it can imagine the complexity of the problem.

When there was plenty of work, when demand exceeded the supply, when the franc fell, the coefficient rose. When credits were restricted, labour more plentiful, and the franc rising, the coefficient fell. The combination of a constant — destruction — and of a variable — cost — precluded all possibility of advance estimates. An estimate that was correct on January 1, 1921, would be entirely wrong a year later: so that the indemnity granted was more than likely to prove too high or too low when the work came to be done, and either the victim of invasion or the Government was bound to lose. The rise and variation of prices was the first sore of reconstruction.

Of remedies there was but one: abundant and regular credits so as to permit the quick completion of approved work without stops or starts. But the enormity of the work to be done was equalled only by the inadequacy of resources. Here the story of the devastated regions merges into the wider history of Europe and of the world, and the reconstruction crisis appears only as part of a more general phenomenon: the *sabotage* of victory by the victors. Justice, equity, treaties, the unanimous conscience of mankind, had placed Germany under the obligation of paying for what she had destroyed. The Fourteen Points of President Wilson, the terms of the Armistice of November 11, 1918, the Treaty of Versailles, had all most solemnly proclaimed that obligation. In December, 1919, the Clemenceau–Lloyd George agreement, ratified by the other Allies, had allotted to France fifty-five per cent of all reparations to be paid by Germany, the total amount of which was to be de-

termined before May 1, 1921, by the Reparations Commission. Pledges never to be fulfilled, repudiated as soon as signed!

Early in 1920, the future was discernible: Germany determined, in order to escape payment, to risk anything, even bankruptcy; the Allies inclined to help rather than hinder the defaulter's game; a separate peace made by the United States; pressure brought by Great Britain to obtain a revision of the treaties; the surrender by France of her rights — such was the substance of those five years. Altogether, from 1921 to May 31, 1926, prior to the Dawes plan, France had received from Germany two billion gold marks and 800 million since it went into operation.[1] By the end of 1925, France had spent to reconstruct three fourths of the devastation 63 billion francs, without counting pensions. France had to find the difference in the place of defaulting Germany. This was the second sore of reconstruction.

What could France do, forced to spend, in the shortest possible space of time, over and above 77 milliards on pensions, something like a hundred milliards on reconstruction? Borrow? Borrowing on such a scale dries up a nation's resources. France borrowed right and left, in every conceivable way: first she borrowed direct, then she established a separate organism, the Crédit National, the capital and interest of whose bonds are guaranteed by the State; finally, she borrowed through the war victims themselves. The national debt grew and grew; the franc fell. Budget and Treasury difficulties became more

[1] These figures are for the spring of 1926.

and more pressing. The amounts paid to the victims of invasion grew smaller, both as to advances made before their claims were accepted and as to amounts paid on account after this had been done. Credits voted for the devastated regions were the first to suffer. Next the Crédit National's bond issues, authorized yearly, were restricted. Delays were followed by expedients — the stretching-out over a long term of a debt payable immediately.

Thus, without denying the principle of its debt, the State sought to escape its consequences and even failed to keep up its payments; for whether made in the form of loans — commissions and expenses on which rose as high as sixteen or eighteen per cent — or of so-called negotiable securities which the banks refused to accept as collateral, the final result was always a reduction in the amount due. Reparation of damage in full ceased to be a fact. Contractors, obliged to make heavy advances, hesitated in presence of the enormity of the sums involved and slowed down on reconstruction. In many localities building plants were shut down. At the end of 1922, a magnificent work had been done — in comparison to which the reconstruction of the South after the American Civil War pales into insignificance. But more than a milliard was overdue to the victims and a great deal of work had not even been touched. In 1926, fifteen milliards francs' worth of reconstruction still remained to be done. Let us stop here; for after the first and the second, this was the third and most serious sore of reconstruction.

Henceforth injustice was to reign, the outcome not

of laws but of circumstances. Increases and variations in cost, changing coefficients, insufficiency and irregularity of resources, delay in and paralysis of payments, combined with the methods applied for the execution of the programme, made non-reconstruction fall heaviest upon those victims least able to bear it. First the means of communication: railroads, highways, roads, telegraphs, and telephones had been restored; then the means of productivity: agricultural, industrial, and commercial enterprises and undertakings of all kinds. Finally — last of all — came the rebuilding of dwellings. Nothing could have been more logical or fairer if the machinery of reconstruction had worked through to the end. But if the machinery broke down, as actually happened, it was the small householder who suffered. This imparted a double and even contradictory aspect to our reconstruction, which made it all the harder for foreigners to understand. On the one hand, just pride in the actual achievement; on the other, equally just anger at its persistent incompleteness. Pride at having reconstructed three fourths of our ruins unaided; anger that we still bore the running sore of the missing fourth. Thus it is that some have criticized our pride, others our inefficiency.

When funds ran out, all railroads and highways had been completely restored. Thanks to advances of seventy-five per cent that the manufacturers and industrial corporations had received on the estimated amount of their damages, the factories were sixty-five per cent rebuilt and all the more important establishments were working to capacity. Thanks to the farm-

ers' prodigious efforts and to the advances made on an acreage basis (Government ploughing, chemical manure, extra indemnities to market gardeners and owners of vineyards), eighty per cent of the fields were tilled, seventy per cent under crops. Even the tradespeople, although less favoured, had prospered rapidly, thanks to increased business and the rise in prices. But as to homes, on the contrary, when their turn came, funds had been exhausted; they were scandalously behind, and the situation was disastrous.

Of the 4,000,000 inhabitants of the war zone before 1914, 3,600,000 had returned. But out of 304,000 houses totally, and 286,000 partially, destroyed, only 280,000 had been repaired and 44,000 rebuilt, so that there was a shortage of 266,000 dwellings.[1] To put it otherwise, eighty-six per cent of the inhabitants had returned; but, taking into account repairs and reconstruction, only fifty-four per cent of the former dwellings were available, and of the 300,000 totally destroyed, only fourteen per cent had been rebuilt, a shortage of eighty-six per cent. This has been made up by all kinds of shelters and temporary constructions. Community life had been resumed. Individual and family life, which centres around the home, was still absent. The forces of industry and commerce had resumed their activity. But the individual still lacked the essentials of his development. Reconstruction, halted halfway as it was, had saved the State, but sacrificed the individual to the community.

For unfinished reconstruction subjected the individual to all that was most repugnant to his tra-

[1] These figures are for 1922.

ditions and instincts. Hard-working, but jealous of his liberty and the secrecy of his own affairs, he became either a beggar lost in the intricacies of legal and administrative chicanery or else a mere numbered pawn. If single-handed he sought to obtain payment of his war damages, it meant endless discussion and difficulties with the Government, the various reparations tribunals, the architects, the contractors, the public Treasury. If, to avoid all this, he joined a building coöperative, which dealt on his behalf with the authorities, he abdicated all independence. His turn came without his being consulted. Neither the architect, the contractor, nor the building materials were chosen by him. It sometimes happened that when the work was done, it was not up to specification. The venal worth of the restored building was always below the cost of reconstruction. Both methods and circumstances made the life of the victim of invasion one of daily disappointment. For the first time in all the centuries that he and his had lived on the same patch of land, he was dependent upon others and had ceased to be his own master.

Did his calling afford him any consolation? Yes, if you mean that his aim was to bring the soil to life again: for it lived; no, if you consider the conditions in which he worked. Bowed down for five years under a foreign yoke or in exile, the peasant found himself upon a land which had no semblance to the past. Man power was lacking. Long before the war shortage of agricultural labour was a commonplace. After the war, with 600,000 peasants slain and amid the throes of reconstruction, the shortage was cruel.

The fields in their mantle of devastation seemed less attractive than before. Besides, in the very fields, not from the towns as in pre-war days, the farmer had to face competition. Every day his farm hands drifted away from him. Why submit to the heavy labour of the fields, why toil for unending hours, when the near-by contractor hired help, any one at any price, to work eight or ten hours a day?

Neither in quality nor in quantity was the harvest to be compared with that of pre-war days. Without working capital — for what reparations he had received had all been spent in restoring the soil — the farmer had no means of storing his crops. Silos, haylofts, barns, and granaries were gone. He was obliged to sell his produce immediately, and the food trusts bought his grain, his beets, and his cattle at their own prices. In 1921, the low price of wheat created a serious crisis. In 1922, there was a panic. Capital needs had trebled and quadrupled. People began to see that in agriculture the apparent real value, the venal worth of the ground itself, is but a minute fraction of the accumulated assets that generations have invested for the equipment of the soil.

Agricultural societies formed in the devastated regions nearly all failed. Why? Because, organized on ordinary business lines, they could not give a normal return on their investments, no matter how well managed. What does this mean, if not that, contrary to what obtains in industry, agriculture absorbs an enormous amount of unremunerated capital? Or again that between the actual real value — that is, the actual cost of reconstitution — and the apparent

value — that is, the venal worth of the land — there is an enormous difference? This difference has been made up by the slow labour of generations, burying in the soil the savings of centuries. When that wealth was destroyed — as was the case in the devastated regions — people began to see what an asset it was.

Moral conditions may be imagined. At first, despite the horror of the surroundings, there was a great deal of optimism and a widespread belief in a prompt return to normal prosperity. Soon a crisis, brought about by the lack of temporary shelters, provoked an outburst of anger calmed only by the great effort which followed on Clemenceau's visit to the devastated regions in 1919. Then, in 1920, surprise and unrest created by newspaper stories of negotiations for the reduction of Germany's debt. Later, amazement and incredulity at the news that the reduction had been accepted as had the Anglo-Saxon contention that before restoring the devastated regions it was necessary to set Germany on her feet again. From then on discouragement constantly fed, after each international conference, by the assertion of statesmen that 'Germany will pay' and the fact that each time Germany's debt was reduced. Finally payments slowed down, soon to cease almost entirely.

At last the victims of invasion understood. They understood that years would elapse before they would see the end of their woes. Many felt that, like those who had fallen, they were not objects of action, but of speech. The oratorical tributes paid to their 'sacred rights' in every budget debate bore a strange likeness to the wreaths laid on the unknown warrior's

grave by defeatists. From time to time a deputy demanded the revision of their damages, exposing their sufferings to suspicion. The small claimants, those who had only a home to rebuild and who, in 1925, were still waiting their turn because of lack of funds, those who had seen the smoke rise from the chimneys of rebuilt factories, the fields bear harvests again, the farms restored, the stores and shops reopened, with still no roof above their heads, felt and still feel the iniquity of existing conditions more keenly than their more fortunate neighbours. In vain you tell them how enormous the work done; they are right when they retort that it is unfinished and that thousands of innocent suffer thereby.

After five years of constant effort, this region, which war so long cut off from the rest of the world, was still morally isolated in the very heart of France. Deep-scarred, it had resumed its material aspect. But its moral and social aspects were yet to be re-created. Reconstruction had been of things rather than of men. Upon it had been set the unrelenting seal of human greed: the individual sacrificed to economic interests. Lack of initiative, lack of confidence — this was the last sore of reconstruction, which least of all could be healed by Government. Absorbed by its material tasks, busy counting and paying for bricks and mortar, begging loans and staving off its creditors, the State had no time to give to all the human woes which went to make up public feeling.

III

The Volunteers of Peace

This unavoidable Government shortcoming was to be made good by foreign effort in a small but utterly devastated sector of the war zone.[1] The undertaking was paradoxical. Success crowned it. Why?

Because its aims were clearly defined. Not to do what the Government was doing and to do what it was not doing. Not to compete with the authorities in the construction of buildings, nor to continue the impersonal benefactions of the Red Cross; but to pursue ordered endeavour within a given territory, to aid individuals to reweld social ties by methods the Government could not employ, above all, to create only that which was adaptable, and by adaptation to ensure permanency. Such was the policy from which there was to be no departure. Many Americans talked of 'rebuilding a city.' But the city rebuilt, better or worse than the others, of what profit would it have been for social reconstruction? What lessons for the future would have survived? To create community life, to penetrate and take root in a strange land, the work of social reconstruction had to be done otherwise: in depth, not on the surface; intensively, not extensively.

[1] The sector entrusted by the French Government to the American Committee for Devastated France included the four cantons of Soissons, Coucy-le-Château, Vic-sur-Aisne, and Anizy-le-Château, or some two hundred thousand acres of the seven million acres of the devastated regions.

That is precisely what Anglo-Saxons call social work. Social work, a broad and elastic term, the elasticity of which enables it to do wonders, at bottom always means helpful relations between the individual and the community and between the community and the individual. True, the founders of the system never contemplated the utter misery of France's devastated regions and their methods were not entirely applicable. But their everyday work in great cities had taught them that, among the masses, the individual, crushed between the millstones of the modern world, is always sacrificed. Society takes thought of him only when he is in a state of crisis. Sick, he goes to hospital; insane, to an asylum; criminal, to prison. In his everyday life, the individual knows nothing of preventive aid. Social work aims to afford preventive aid to the individual. It dates from the end of the last century. Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer had just spread the doctrine of association; human, family, and professional association. Social art was the next step after social science. It aimed to raise the standard of those placed by circumstances below normal. It aimed to readjust the social organization. It aimed to set right the things that were wrong.

The first awakening of these notions was when Arnold Toynbee and seven Oxford undergraduates went to live in the poorest quarter in London to learn its needs by sharing them. The idea of prevention by presence, which inspired the English workers in 1883, animated the American workers in 1919. It had long since proved its worth in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Toynbee Hall in London led to a later development in America, Hull House in Chicago; and the movement spread in the United States until now the National Conference of Social Work meets annually and has created a lasting tie between the many American associations devoted to the social improvement of the individual, family, or profession. A whole literature has sprung up which has spread the fame of the aspirations, work, and success of those various associations.

The great growth of social work has complicated its organization. In 1915, there were twenty-five thousand social workers in the United States, highly specialized in various branches. Family and professional hygiene; physical and moral education; preventions of infantile mortality and of tuberculosis; the fight against alcoholism; regulation of child and woman labour; school and hospital legislation — all this and much more has been attempted and achieved. Hospitals, dispensaries, clubs, libraries, serve as fulcrums on which the work is levered. Special schools exist for training the workers. This is social work with its thousand activities. What is its mainspring? The public spirit of the community, the greatest asset of American life, an asset in which France has always been entirely lacking. Here we have one of the most striking contrasts between French and American life, between the temperaments of our two peoples. Americans believe in the preventive and private effort of free citizens; Frenchmen content themselves with the curative effort of the State in the guise of Providence.

This contrast must be emphasized because it is the key to what follows. Let us take hygiene. Sixty-five years ago Florence Nightingale created the profession of nurse in Anglo-Saxon countries. The nursing profession was unknown in France before the beginning of this century. The American or British nurse, whose professional dignity vies with that of the doctor, is gradually shaping the physical existence of the citizens, not only in hospital, but in everyday life. Without waiting for sickness to make its appearance, she teaches the right use of heat, air, light, and cleanliness. Under various names, hospital nurse, district nurse, visiting nurse, social assistant, home visitor, school visitor, she is the preventive foe of everything that menaces public health. She is free from and unhampered by the political and religious differences that divide the community. She has her own training schools, her status in life, her associations, her magazines. She has a definite place and rank in the community.

In France, where Saint-Vincent de Paul in the seventeenth century had a prophetic vision of the future, nothing similar exists. Because no clear distinction has ever been made between the care of the sick and the service of the sick. Again, because religions and politics, which have been kept out of the picture in the United States, have invaded public health in France as they have invaded everything else. In the past, the sick in our hospitals were tended by nuns whose professional skill was often inferior to their admirable devotion. To assist them were servants without hope of promotion, as all the

titular nurses were nuns. When lay nursing — a party measure — came into effect, the nuns left and the lay servants became nurses in their place. The introduction of lay nursing wiped out for twenty years whatsoever of professional skill there had been in the former system. Training schools for nurses were created, but the output was slow. Conditions being such in the best hospitals, what can be said of preventive hygiene? It was simply non-existent when war broke out.

Turn now to the training of youth. A similar contrast existed between French and Anglo-Saxon methods. When Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Baden Powell, commander of the military police in the Boer War, saw that his street-bred men were slower and less adept than their South-African opponents, he devised a training system for them, from which the Boy Scout movement grew. The expedient imagined to meet an emergency became a vocation, out of which the Anglo-Saxon world has fashioned a marvellous instrument of expansion. Training in contact with nature; an educational system, at once complex and incomplete; which is neither an athletic association, a course of military preparedness, nor a post-graduate course; which is nothing of all these, and yet pertains to each of them; a preparation for the battle of life based, outside of all book learning, on the development of the individual according to rules sufficiently elastic to retain the semblance of a game; that is the Boy Scout movement with its leaders and its troops, the mirror of the ancient clan, its physical culture, moral stamina, practical science, its atmos-

phere of discipline, honour, self-sacrifice, and good faith without religious bias. The marvellous success of the idea shows how perfectly adapted it is to the Anglo-Saxon race.

Transplant the same idea to France; at once it withers and fades. France can show nothing even faintly resembling the prodigious activity of the British Boy Scouts, 25,000 of whom, from 1914 to 1918, kept watch over the coasts of Great Britain, 100,000 of whom served in the auxiliary services of the army; nothing which even faintly resembles the 500,000 American Boy Scouts who rendered yeoman service to the American Treasury during the Liberty Loan campaigns. In France, where the Boy Scout movement might have claimed descent from the *éscoutes* of Froissart listening at the outposts, it was split from the first by politics and religion. As soon as started, the movement divided into three branches: Protestant, neutral, Catholic. As a result, its recruits were few and its means small. A movement which, long before 1914, had triumphantly proved its worth in English-speaking countries, in France was but a halting experiment! The war over, would it be possible to make this experiment succeed in the most devastated region in France?

On the other hand, would it be possible, and for the benefit of the adult population, to acclimate in France that essential factor of democratic culture: the public library, as it exists in Great Britain and the United States? The aim: that every one may read, and read what he or she pleases, with the assent of the local authorities and the financial support of all the citi-

zens; that the supply of reading matter should become a public municipal service like the supply of gas or water, or street-cleaning. The Ewart Bill, at once copied in the United States, authorized English townships to impose rates for this purpose. The resources furnished by the penny-rate sufficed for the buildings, the books, and the means of circulating them. These public libraries contain a little of everything, but above all modern books, reference books, magazines, even newspapers. These public libraries are open to all and not only to the erudite pining for learning. They are suited to the people — for mankind counts more ignorant than learned. To develop a taste for reading, the people must find at the library the papers they once read in the saloon. No iron bars defy the reader; the books are easily accessible; the reading-room is open all day and far into the night. The growth of public reading in a century is strikingly shown by four figures: free libraries in the United States increased from 31 to 15,000; the books increased in numbers from 75,000 to 100,000,000. That is public service indeed.

In France, a country of ancient and resplendent culture, democracy, founded on the reason of the citizen, has prepared nothing similar to gratify his curiosity. The year-book of each Department gives the list of public libraries. There are libraries in many communes. But no one goes there to read. Most of them are open only two hours a week; they contain neither magazines nor newspapers nor reference books of any kind. Many of their books are out of date and in very bad condition. Their budget, consisting of a

few francs voted every year by the municipality, permits neither the purchase of new books, nor proper installation, nor the services of a librarian. Generally located in the darkest and dingiest room of city hall or village school, entrusted for some insignificant stipend to a local caretaker, who knows neither their contents nor their use, our public libraries are graveyards.

Once again a striking contrast: on one side public spirit; on the other individualism; on one side democracy in action; on the other the label of democracy. France has magnificent libraries of untold wealth for men of science, who read or work there. In 1914, the only real reading-room practically available to the people was the reading-room of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Here are some figures: In 1905, the city of Paris granted its public libraries a credit of 31,000 francs. The Government granted the 3000 public libraries in France an annual credit of 50,000 francs. The school libraries, which flourished under Jules Ferry, had rapidly declined and were almost always badly equipped and in unsuitable surroundings. In 1902, there were 43,000 school libraries in 70,000 schools. Paris, with ten times the population of Edinburgh, had twenty-five per cent fewer readers.

I have cited three instances. I could give many others. All would point to the same moral. Social reconstruction, impossible by official means, was also without that unofficial support which comes of tradition: for if France has political traditions she is totally lacking in social traditions. Social reconstruction attempted in one sector of our devastated regions by

foreign initiative was bound to encounter two obstacles, one born of the tragic conditions obtaining on the spot, the other born of French inexperience in the matter and of our traditional indifference to collective action. To organize Franco-American cooperation on any scale, it is not sufficient to talk of Lafayette and Rochambeau, nor to rely on the common destiny of sister democracies.

Conditions in the devastated region where the American committee was at work were tragic.[1] Nowhere was material reconstruction or social reconstruction more difficult. Both were dependent upon the same factor: nothing could be done unless and until agriculture was restored to its old prosperity. For that, money and coöperation were indispensable. In March, 1922, the farmers of the Aisne met, and everywhere one heard the same cry of anguish: 'If we do not receive assistance, we cannot possibly go on.' The poor quality of the harvests, the disappearance of the sugar refineries, the competition of Belgian agriculture, added to the high cost of production, the slow returns, and the absence of working capital, continued to weigh heavily on the Soissonnais. American aid was organized so as to meet the two essential needs

[1] The Hindenburg line crossed it both ways. Of 841 communes, only 37 were intact. Of 1,840,000 acres, only 15,000 had escaped devastation. Of 600,000 inhabitants, 290,000 had had to flee their homes, the remainder staying in the very heart of the struggle. The Aisne headed the black list of villages ravaged, the arable acreage of land destroyed, of cattle carried off, of non-industrial damage inflicted. It was second on the list of houses and factories destroyed. Its damages were estimated at more than 25 milliard francs, cost of reconstruction, of which 10 milliards represented dwellings, 4 milliards real estate, and 7 milliards goods and chattels. Between 1919 and 1925, the French Government spent 10 milliard francs in the Aisne without completing the work to be done.

of this situation: coöperative effort and credits. Cooperative effort without credits would have discredited for all time a system already looked upon by the small farmer with suspicion. Credits without coöperative effort would have scattered money unavailingly among individuals. The combination of coöperative effort and of money solved the problem.

This success contributed to the reduction of the red zone[1] of the Aisne from 45,000 acres to a rapidly diminishing 5000 and was attended by other far-reaching consequences. It modernized methods of cultivation to such an extent that the tractors and harvesters of the Blérancourt Committee were actually bought by the farmers converted to their use. It demonstrated to the race most loath to accept it the value of coöperation. The effect of this revelation spread apace, and the Department of the Aisne boasted three hundred agricultural syndicates in 1922 as against twelve in 1914. It developed the idea of coöperation, thus making social work possible. The foreign workers who had helped the rebirth of the soil could be trusted in all things. Their agricultural achievement became the key to everything. It opened the door to confidence and coöperation, without which neither public health services, nor the Boy Scout movement, nor public libraries, nor the social centres could have overcome the instinctive distrust of the Picard peasant.

To return to the mobile hospital which, its war

[1] The 'zone rouge' was the sector in which the Government experts had considered the restoration of normal life impossible, where to heal the scars of war would have cost more than the land was worth.

service over, had been attached to Blérancourt in 1919, four years later, one hundred and twenty towns and villages and two great cities, Soissons and Rheims, were being served by twenty-seven trained nurses who looked after the health of the mothers, the babies, and the school-children, perfecting in the region between Oise and Aisne the first complete public-health organization ever seen in France. Six main centres with fully equipped dispensaries, twenty-five local dispensaries, a *goutte de lait* at Soissons with distributions of milk to the poorer villages; kindergartens and nurseries of untold service to widows, working women, the wives of wounded soldiers; baby shows; holiday camps in Switzerland; prompt measures against epidemics, all too rife amid the ruins — such was the scope of the American organization which worked unremittingly from 1919 to 1923.[1]

From 1919 to 1923, the nurses made 400,000 visits, half of them home visits, and gave 200,000 prescriptions. The results of their activity showed immediately in the health statistics of the department. Four years after the armistice, infantile mortality was 8.7 per cent in the rest of the Aisne and 2.4 per cent in the American sector. Of every thousand children born in the American sector, 980 lived, as against only 910 elsewhere, being 70 young lives saved for France.

[1] The Blérancourt Hospital, which was, for several years, the only one for the whole district, recorded 220,000 days of hospitalization. It was organized by The War Service Committee of the Medical Women's National Association, and under the name of American Women's Hospital No. 1, carried on war service at Luzancy (Seine-et-Marne), and from 1919 to 1922 a service for the civilians at Blérancourt.

Multiply the difference by the annual birth figures for the whole of France, it would mean an increase of some 50,000 French children a year!

But the child's life saved, the work had only begun. For local conditions were such that the most vigilant care was necessary for its physical and moral development. War had not only been hard on the bodies of the children. Exile and enemy occupation were anything but moral stimulants and the upbringing of the children had nothing to gain thereby. Parents, everywhere scattered, neglected the education of their offspring. Contact with the invader had muddied the most elementary notions of morality. Promiscuity with foreign labour could only make them worse; bad examples were everywhere more numerous than good. Training schools and schools where practical morality was taught, school canteens and playgrounds were the first steps in this direction. Everywhere education and play went hand in hand. Then the Boy Scout movement was introduced into the war zone. In 1921, camps were organized in the woods of the Aisne and the Oise, where several hundred boys were initiated into Scout methods. For the first time the three French organizations, heretofore absolutely separated, met together. For the first time, also, children accustomed to the sadness of ruins took a bath of normal life and untouched nature.[1]

From the very first the grown-up people, like the

[1] The Boy Scout camps organized by the American Committee for Devastated France at Francport, Corcy, and La Croix Saint-Ouen took care of two thousand youths from the devastated regions. The Government and municipalities participated in their organization. Scout federations of Great Britain, the United States and Belgium were represented.

early American pioneers, asked for reading matter. They had had none before the catastrophe. Anizy had a tiny library with a budget of forty francs a year; Vic, Blérancourt, and Coucy had no budget at all. Soissons had forty thousand volumes, of which the public was allowed access to four thousand, and that for only two hours a week. In 1919, a makeshift library was opened at Vic-sur-Aisne merely for the satisfaction of local needs. But, run on American lines by American women, it gave the devastated regions the first real public library France had ever had. Open all the time, well furnished, well heated, well lighted, with card indexes, dictionaries, works of reference, and agricultural works, it was always full. Other libraries opened in quick succession at Blérancourt, Anizy, Coucy, and Soissons. Books were circulated from commune to commune by automobile. The number of readers in the libraries rose in two years from 7000 to 40,000; the number of readers who took out books from 8000 to 14,000; the number of books read from 11,000 to 100,000; the number of books loaned from 22,000 to 130,000. Henceforth the American free library had won for itself a place of its own in the heart of the battlefields.[1]

[1] The success was so unprecedented that from all sides specialists came to follow the experiment. The National Library, the French Library Association, the National University Board, the City of Paris, all sent their representatives. The new Soissons Library with its 6000 new books, its magazines and newspapers free to the public, with its 4000 readers out of less than 15,000 inhabitants, aroused emulation. Paris itself turned to the American Committee to obtain an up-to-date free library. Among its eighty-three municipal libraries it chose that of Belleville for the experiment, a library in the heart of the working district, located in one room, the walls of which, pierced by a single window, were covered with mildew. The city gave a piece of ground, the Government gave a wooden barrack,

All this was accomplished the while France and the United States followed different political paths.[1] Five years after the armistice, there were still five or six cantons in France where the combined effort of the two countries endured. But some day this had to come to an end. A foreign association could not remain eternally on French soil.[2] Sooner or later, either the funds or the voluntary workers would not be forthcoming. Must the work then disappear and leave nothing but the memory of a generous impulse, of a worthy action, or a magnificent achievement of coöperation? To escape this fate there was but one possible way. It was to substitute, for those already existing, new organizations in which French effort

the American Committee contributed 100,000 francs, furniture, new books, and a trained librarian. Within a year, the Belleville library, rejuvenated, well lighted and heated, had a circulation of 700 volumes a day as against a former maximum of 90.

[1] See below, Chapter V.

[2] The American Committee for Devastated France had had its headquarters at 15 Boulevard Lannes in Paris ever since 1919; but it had always allowed its centres in the Aisne great freedom of action. At Blérancourt the general services, hospital, automobile park, repair depot, building plant, sawmill, etc. At Vic, Coucy, Soissons, and Anizy, social services, health services, children's services, and libraries. Over the 115 communes, a continuous social survey. In Paris, whence the impulse came, daily correspondence with the committees in the United States, with the French authorities, the services in the Aisne, and the victims; the financial department and the general management of all the Allied activities, farms at Villeneuve la Hurée, at Bretonville and at la Troche, labour depots at Villeneuve Saint-Georges, health centres at Rheims and Carlepont, hotel canteen at Laon to receive visitors, courses in canning fruit and vegetables and preserves, farm hygiene and farm women's clubs, called 'Ruches Paysannes,' founded in several departments; warehouse with medical and health supplies, Boy Scout equipment, gifts in kind of all sorts distributed not only in the Aisne, but to a number of French institutions (Foyer of the Army of the Levant, Sailors' Sanatorium, Rheims Athletic Association, Institute for the Blind, Department of Ardennes and Meurthe-sur-Moselle).

would replace American initiative and achievement. But to do this three things were essential. To obtain, in addition to the twenty-seven millions already spent in seven years,[1] the capital necessary to the permanent endowment of the institutions to be retained; to persuade local communities to take over their management and make the necessary sacrifices for their maintenance; to enlist a French personnel to run them.

The money came from the United States at a time when every one said that no more money was obtainable. The transfer of the services to local associations took place without trouble or difficulty. A private corporation, admitted by the French Government to the rights and privileges of public utility corporations, inherited the hospital and dispensaries and was endowed with ample funds to maintain the public health services and equipment. The playgrounds and gymnasiums were ceded to the communes. An interfederal office maintained the collaboration of all the French Boy Scout organizations and the Château of Cappy was given them as a centre. The municipalities took over the social centres and the libraries together

[1] Of the 27 millions spent from 1917 to 1924, about twenty-five per cent was repaid by the victims of the invasion to whom advances had been made or goods sold below cost. The principal items of expenditure were: first-aid and gifts, 8,500,000 francs; transportation, 5,000,000; building and construction, 4,000,000; agriculture, 4,000,000; public-health services, 3,000,000; children, 4,000,000; foyers, 1,000,000; information service and propaganda, 1,500,000; administrative expenses and travelling, 4,500,000. The overhead charges for the central administration in Paris were only 4.9 per cent of the total expenses. The staff at the time of the greatest activity numbered two hundred and fifty persons. At the beginning it was almost exclusively made up of volunteers, but later many paid specialists were engaged.

with small donations. The Comité Français de la Bibliothèque Moderne undertook to popularize American library methods. France, although impoverished, granted active support. Even the smallest communes voted credits for free libraries, and the revenues of the foundation for social hygiene were doubled the second year by local support.

There remained the problem of recruiting a French personnel, that is, of training it in special schools. Nursing staff: Some twenty scholarships enabled French nurses to be sent to the United States for post-graduate courses, and thanks to a liberal endowment, the training school for nurses of the rue Amyot in Paris increased the number of its pupils. Scout staff: the Château of Cappy was fitted out as a permanent camp on the model of the English camps, and opened to the various French and foreign Scout associations for instruction of chief Scouts. Library staff: a training school for librarians was founded in Paris under the auspices of the American Library Association with the assistance of French and American specialists.[1] Thus in the three directions logical development was pursued to ensure continuity. The formation of French staffs made possible the perpetuation of the institutions. Management, funds, staffs, the three elements necessary to the survival of the American effort, were all present, and from the very first the new schools showed their vitality.[2] The

[1] The teaching staff consisted of Miss Bogle, Miss Parsons and Miss Mann, on the American side; and of Mlle. Famin and Messrs. Eugène Morel, Coyecque, Firmin Roz and Henriot on the French.

[2] The graduates from the training school for nurses were called to fill the following situations: superintendents of *crèches* and of centres for putting

goal was reached, and reached in sympathy and understanding. Lasting instruments of achievement remained at the disposal of French and American co-workers. Amid the ruins of improvised coöperation, here was something on which to build hopes of ordered achievement.

This is what the people, whose instinct often goes further than official dialectics, felt when, in 1923, at Anizy and, in 1924, at Blérancourt, they gathered round the women who had ventured this great experiment and left among them so many enduring proofs of their friendship.[1] In the historic grounds of the

babies out to board, visiting nurses for children, social assistants, nurses on the Chemin de Fer du Nord. The training school was directed by Mlle. de Joannis with the technical supervision of Major Julia Stimson, chief nurse of the American army.

The graduates from the training school for librarians were called to fill positions at the Sorbonne, the library of the Archbishopric of Paris, the American Library of the rue de l'Elysée, the Société de Géographie, the Chemin de Fer du Nord, the Ministry of Finance, the Institute of Slav Languages, and with such great publishing firms as Hachette and Armand Colin, and with public libraries at Saint-Ouen, Alfortville, Amiens, Périgueux, Metz, Stockholm, Prague, Constantinople, Detroit, Pittsburgh, etc.

[1] The following were the principal workers in the American Committee for Devastated France: General direction, Mrs. A. M. Dike, Miss Anne Morgan; direction of the centres, Miss Margaret Parsons, Miss Edith Hadley, Mrs. Marie Conrad Lehr, Miss Muriel Valentine, Miss Elizabeth Eames, Mrs. Arthur Ellis Hamm, Miss Mary Martin; public health, Mrs. Breckinridge, Miss Evelyn Walker; transportation, Miss Miriam Blagden, Mme. André Vagliano, Miss Rose Dolan, Miss Barney; hospital, Dr. Harold, Dr. Bonness; kindergarten, Miss Elsie Schmidt, Miss Clark, Miss Pauline Lewis; agriculture, M. Arthur Bille, Miss Beatrice Williams, M. Binet, Mme. Boutroux; libraries, Miss Jessie Carson, M. Ernest Coyecque, M. Eugène Morel, Miss Sarah Bogle; foyers, Miss Alice Parsons, Miss Marie Lewis, Miss Lloyd; construction, Mr. Ponce; professional or household training, Mrs. Gillespie Stacy, Mrs. Bernice Davis, Mrs. Robert C. Malcolm, Mme. Devouge, Mme. Babet Charton; sports and physical training, Mrs. Gillespie Stacey, Miss Phillips, Miss Abele, Mlle. Andrée Dumont, and departmental physical instructors.

old château, restored by the Americans and by them given to the commune, several thousand Frenchmen, celebrating the work of the past few years, thought that they were merely expressing their gratitude. As a matter of fact they were drawing upon the future — which is what men make it — a draft of hope.

CHAPTER V
LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

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I

The Problem of War Coöperation

We must now turn back a little. In various ways France and the United States had worked together. Victory in 1918 had crowned the combined efforts of the two Governments. Social welfare rooted in the Aisne bore witness to the full success of private co-operation. But here as there, in public as in private endeavour, what had been the road travelled? What in either case had been the secret of the success achieved? A question rarely asked, and one not undeserving of answer.

On April 16, 1917, ten days after America had declared war, it fell to my lot to direct on behalf of France our common effort.[1] Actor and spectator for thirty-one months, I am still, ten years later, amazed at the prodigious results obtained by the two countries. Ever-memorable days, when twice the war seemed lost; days pregnant with victory; days during which the initial effort of 1917, so weak and

[1] The decree creating the French High Commission in the United States and appointing me High Commissioner with authority of all French services in America was signed on April 16th. I arrived in Washington on May 17th. The High Commission was organized within a month and had a staff of 900 French and 300 American officials. It comprised a general secretariat, a military service, a naval service, a service of administration and control, a financial service, a manufacturing and purchasing service, an armament service, a maritime and transport service, a service of food-supplies, a blockade service, and a service of information.

halting, grew beneath the spur of danger, grew by the progress of mutual understanding. Every nerve was strained to victory; trains rushed from the borders of Mexico to the ports of New England, transports dotted the Atlantic, the Channel, the Mediterranean; men, guns, shells, tanks went forward unceasingly to the front, to the battle of the Allies which roared on the plains of Flanders and along the Cambrian fen, on the plateaus of Santerre, of Valois, and of Champagne, in the forest of the Argonne, on the slopes of the Alps, in the valleys of the Piava, on the hills of Macedonia and the sands of Syria.

Astounding figures tell of the effort made, the help mutually furnished. In less than eighteen months the United States armed itself to the teeth: its army grew from 190,000 to more than 5,000,000 (2,000,000 actually landed in France); its output of war material increased 300 per cent; its shipping increased from 2,000,000 to 6,000,000 tons; it spent $33,000,000,000 (nearly $3,000,000 an hour); it supplied Europe with food and arms; it sent to France alone 2,000,000 tons of steel (170,000,000 shells for 75s), 5,000,000 tons of foodstuffs (the ration of nearly 12,000,000 Frenchmen for eighteen months); it placed at our disposal 680,000 tons of shipping. An almost unbelievable achievement if one remembers the past, the existing circumstances (both material and moral), the absence of military preparedness, the total ignorance of things European. During all this time, France and Great Britain held the front waiting for the arrival of American reënforcements, the one providing

transport, the other arms for the United States army. At the armistice, more than a million American soldiers had crossed the seas in British ships, and France had supplied all the cannon, 75s and 155s short, all the tanks, 81 per cent of the aeroplanes, 57 per cent of the heavy artillery used by the American army, as well as all the 65,000,000 shells fired by its artillery. The splendour of this achievement led people to believe that it had been spontaneous.

None had been more difficult. It had been difficult even in matters military, where the spirit of coöperation was intense. Without American reënforcements, the war might have been lost in 1918. But where were these reënforcements to come from? Regular army: 190,000 men; National Guard: 150,000 men; increase possible under the law of 1916: insignificant. Once the draft had been voted, how were the recruits to be instructed when there was a shortage of 12,000 officers? How were the recruits to be armed and equipped when American factories, which since 1914 had been supplying the Allies only with raw material or unfinished forgings, were not equipped for the rapid production of finished pieces of artillery or aeroplanes, and in any case had to continue their deliveries to the Allies if defeat were to be averted? That, in all its unrelenting rigour, was the problem of coöperation: how to pass from numbers to organization, from manufacture to armament, from inexperience to efficiency; and, in each of these, how to conciliate contrary necessities. The undertaking, every one admitted, might well have proved beyond human possibility.

When I assumed responsibility for it, I knew that even those in whose name I was acting had no faith in its success. My Government, in bidding me God-speed, had said: 'Do the best you can.' Our generals had confided to me that they did not believe it possible to create a great American army in a few months. General Foch said: 'Send me American regiments to be incorporated in our brigades.' General Pétain said: 'Recruit volunteers to fill up our losses.' Our Air Service said: 'Don't let the Americans try to build aeroplanes and motors. Let them specialize on raw materials and parts.' Every one looked upon the United States as a vast reservoir from which European forces and supplies could be fed. No one believed it capable of creating a new army to be added to those already in line. Every one believed it would be dangerous to make the attempt.

Yet the creation of an American army was the only thing that could key America up to the necessary pitch. The passive rôle that Europe expected the United States to play would have discouraged its enthusiasm. When a nation of one hundred and ten millions goes to war, to so distant a war, it cannot consent to be merely a recruiting depot for others. If it goes to war, it must be its own war, with its own army and under its own flag. If we had refused to recognize the military autonomy of the United States, if we had insisted upon amalgamation, coöperation would have been a failure. What was true technically was psychologically wrong; but a choice had to be made. My choice, made from the very first, was op-

posed by our military leaders for months.[1] As late as February, 1918, General Foch kept on repeating that an independent American army would be only of small assistance in 1918, or indeed in 1919. Only extreme peril could silence these discussions which hampered action and brought men and ideas into conflict.

There was the same difficulty of agreement in connection with army training. When I landed in the United States, some of the French and British officers attached to the Viviani and Balfour missions were unconsciously assuming an attitude of instructors. They took advantage of their experience to force upon America lessons which she willingly gives but dislikes to receive. Proud of West Point and of its War College, the American army balked and refused the would-be mentors. 'They treated us,' an American general told me, 'like Moroccans.' In addition to this ruffling of pride, there was real divergence of views. Americans wanted the American army to be fashioned by American methods and had little use for foreign instructors. Marshal Joffre was asked to send only

[1] On January 8, 1918, I cabled to the French Government: 'If your aim is really amalgamation, that is, the enlistment of the American army by small units on our front, you will fail. It is not only the American High Command which will oppose such a policy, but the Government, public opinion, and events. You could not get the English to consent to any such thing when their army was quite small; and you will not get the Americans to consent. If, on the contrary, you intend this only as a temporary measure, I believe that to complete their training we shall manage to obtain the incorporation of American divisions and brigades, perhaps even of regiments. During my stay in France, I had several talks on the subject with General Pershing who, on this temporary basis, did not say No. But if we appear to ask more and try to dislocate the future American army, we shall get nothing, not even the foregoing.'

thirteen. It took three months to get three hundred instructors accepted. In many divisions these instructors, even when camouflaged as modest *informateurs*, were confined to their own arm, excluded from Officers' Training Camps, rarely consulted on tactical instructions or on staff training, and at times left totally unemployed.

'After all,' said General Morrison, the Chief of Instruction, to General Vignal, head of our military services, 'I find your tactics and those of the English pretty poor. We want to do something different.'

But for the English defeat of March, 1918, we should have waited months for the order of April 3d which made coöperation real by ordering all division commanders to use 'in full extent' the allied instructors and to follow their advice on the training of units and the order of departure for the front.[1]

After instruction difficulties came those of equipment. That it seemed would be a simple matter, unaffected by preconceived ideas. The United States had but little artillery and what it had was of inferior quality. It was unprepared for intensive production. The advantage of uniform equipment was admitted by all. As early as May 26, 1917, I was able to inform General Pershing officially that my Government, if it received the necessary raw material, would

[1] Secretary of War N. D. Baker, General Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, and General Peyton C. March, Chief-of-Staff, helped me greatly to obtain these results. From my long correspondence with them I take, for instance, this appeal of January 8, 1918: 'Liaison between our officers and the War Department is totally insufficient. Franco-American coöperation is less effective to-day than it was when the Expeditionary Force was organized.'

undertake to supply his army with field artillery, light howitzers, and shells. And yet at the first trials of the 75s brought over from France, the two colonels attached to General Crozier, Chief of Ordnance, refused to leave their car to see them. Opposition began to appear in Congress and in the press. American manufacturers were losing orders; Congressmen were irritated over having voted credits for war material that had been discarded; experts were humiliated because models they had invented and constructed were rejected. Obstacles, both economic and psychological, presented themselves; two months elapsed before common sense triumphed, and a little later General Crozier, who had courageously assumed the responsibility, paid for it with his post.

When it came to the transportation of the troops, things were even worse. What illusions subsisted! On January 1, 1918, we had 143,000 Americans in France; 50,000 more on February 1st; 39,000 more on March 1st; and, during this time, General Foch was asking for 140,000 men a month, failing which, he assured me, America would miss the 1918 campaign. On the other side, in Washington, General March was saying: 'An army? I was ordered to supply one. Here it is. Where are the ships?' Meanwhile, from the liberated Russian front, the enemy was bringing up three divisions a month, and we were transporting only one across the Atlantic. Without the blow that fell in March and induced England to give up half of her shipping, thus bringing the monthly arrivals of American troops up to 300,000, these sterile discussions would have gone on indefinitely. Two months

later in Chaumont, at the request of the Supreme Command, which did not think victory possible before the autumn of 1919, we drew up plans for the embarkation of more than 3,000,000 men before September of that year.[1] We had made progress indeed!

In France, as the reënforcements which brought the certainty of victory landed on our soil, a maze of material and moral complications wove itself around them. The whole military machine was at sixes and sevens; nothing worked smoothly. There were Americans — billeted or in encampments — in the four corners of France. When they wanted anything, they applied to our various Government agencies, to every service of every ministry. These contacts were complicated enough for the French; for the

[1] Here is the schedule of transportation drawn up at that Conference:

1918	July	274,000 men
	August	278,000
	September	284,000
	October	290,000
	November	296,000
	December	302,000
1919	January	308,000
	February	314,000
	March	320,000
	April	245,000
	May	82,000 replacements only
	June	88,000
	July	94,000
	August	100,000
		3,275,000 men

In a cable sent the next day to my first assistant, M. de Billy, I made the following comment on this table: 'We must adjust the tonnage to the drafts. In other words, the supply of men may get ahead of the tonnage, but it would be deadly dangerous for the tonnage to fall short. I continue to believe, however, that, with the aid of British shipping, the small contribution France can make, American construction, and the increase in European crops the military transportation situation will improve from month to month. Communicate the foregoing to M. Jusserand for his information and to the War Department.'

Americans they were inextricably confusing. Everywhere there was delay and misunderstanding, offence was given and taken, little or nothing got done. In order to make coöperation possible, it was necessary to create a Government department in Paris, the General Commissariat of American Affairs, which transported the centre of our services from America to France.[1] After having sought in the United States the things that France needed, it fell to my lot to seek in France the things that the American army needed. The scene changed, but not the problem.

As before, the problem had its material and its moral aspects. The limited capacity of our ports and railroads, the lack of open spaces for training, for encampments, for depots, the inadequate supply of horses, of aeroplanes, of hospital beds, all led to daily difficulties. Also, to obtain every available ounce of tonnage, it was necessary to impose fresh sacrifices on France in the matter of supplies. Old men, women, and children, whose unrelenting labour had saved our crops, saw their last horses taken from them; hotel keepers saw their business wiped out; houses and furniture alike were requisitioned for the American army; complaints, no matter how justified, had the steam-roller of general interest passed over them. The humble and thankless effort made behind the

[1] The General Commissariat of American Affairs included the following services: General Secretariat; Military Service (which, under the orders of General Le Rond, also formed, for the sake of uniformity, the inter-allied section of Marshal Foch's staff); Financial Service; Transport Service; Service of Administrative and Legal Affairs; Press and Information Service; Mission to American G.H.Q., under the orders first of General Ragueneau and then of Colonel Linard; Mission to the Service of Supplies, in the ports, etc., under General Fillonneau.

front was never seen by the public, and yet its patient performance saved the fighting forces.[1]

Nations remember only the high spots of wars. What did they grasp of the tragic period of 1917–18? The Rumanian disaster, Caporetto, the British Fourth Army, the Chemin des Dames. Were those the decisive events of the great struggle? No! The essential things were the problems of transportation, rotation of shipping and submarine sinkings, the financial problem, the problems of coöperation. Any shortcoming in the adjustment of effort, any breakdown in the machinery of supply, might have left our soldiers weaponless. Here are some of the cabled orders sent from Paris to the French High Commission in Washington between May 27th and June 16th:

May 27th, from Food Ministry: 'The cereal supply is threatened. Rush shipments as quickly as possible.'

[1] Here are, according to the report of Mr. Crowell, American Assistant Secretary of State for War, the principal results obtained for the organization of the American army in France: 'For purposes of instruction the General Commissariat placed at the disposal of General Pershing 33 encampments whose area exceeded 16,000 square kilometres, 43 large barrack buildings, 75 forts, 17 rest camps, 6 artillery parks, 12,000 wooden barracks. For the Medical Department, 90,000 beds of which 30,000 were in barracks, 20,000 in hotels, 25,000 in schools, 15,000 in private houses, in addition to 3000 hospital tents. The war material supplied comprised 4881 fully equipped aeroplanes, 2150 cannons of 75, 1684 pieces of artillery of other calibres, 260 tanks, and every shell that the American army fired.' The transportation services were furnished — and this was the hardest part of our task — with 120,000 horses and mules, taken from the remaining resources of the country. On the other hand, the American General Staff has calculated that by our supplies of wood and material for the hospitals, we saved 1,400,000 tons of shipping, by our supplies of armament 470,000 tons, and by our supplies of animals 2,200,000 tons: in all, a saving of 4,000,000 tons of shipping. This was all used for the transportation of men. In this way more than 600,000 were able in six months to cross the ocean who otherwise would have been left on the other side.

May 28th, from Ministry of Munitions: 'Send 1,000 lorries urgent.'

May 29th, from Transport Ministry: 'Indispensable secure immediately 30,000 tons shipping for food-supply devastated regions.'

June 3d, from Ministry of Munitions: 'Increase shipments copper to 10,000 tons monthly.'

June 5th, from Ministry of Agriculture: 'Send all haste 400 reapers binders.'

June 6th, from Ministry of Marine: 'Send 12,000 tons gasoline for merchant marine and 24,000 tons for navy.'

June 11th, from Ministry of Munitions: 'Increase shipments nitrate to 46,000 tons monthly instead of 15,000. Vital for national defense. You must arrange for this in addition to programme.'

June 13th, from Ministry of Munitions: 'Send 2,000 tons of lead monthly.'

June 16th, from Ministry of Munitions: 'Send 6,500 small trucks.'

June 16th, from Food Ministry: 'Arrange for 80,000 tons wheat in excess of programme. Most serious situation ever. Any failure or delay may prove dangerous.'

Day after day the orders came over the wires: now for 300 locomotives, or 2000 kilometres of rails, or 3000 tons of tin, monthly; then coal for Algeria or food supplies for the West Indies; and, in December, 1917, 150,000 tons of oil; in January, 1918, an additional 200,000 tons of foodstuffs. This list reads like a nightmare. For how were all these demands to be met?

From 1914 to 1917, relying on the immensity of British resources, France did not order a single ton of shipping in the United States. Between January and May, 1917, Germany sank five million tons, and England was so hard pressed that she had to with-

draw 500,000 tons from French charter. On the docks in America, 600,000 tons of goods for France were waiting their turn for shipment. The French Government, after reducing the demands of the armies by thirty per cent, asked me to ship 730,000 tons monthly instead of the 240,000 sent previously. There was a shortage of 490,000 tons a month. That meant a shortage of everything that was essential in food-supplies and war material, the things to eat and to fight with. And I was getting cables, 'Ask the United States.'

But the United States was no better off than we were. The German vessels seized by the authorities had all been subjected to scientific sabotage, and six months at least were needed to put the vessels in commission. Neutral shipping? It was protected by international law, and fifteen months passed before we were able to use the Dutch boats. American? There was not much of it, and it was badly needed to fetch nitrates from South America which were turned into high explosives in the United States. New construction? At once, as in matters military, a conflict of views and of opinions arose. France looked upon the improvised shipyards as a reservoir for cargo boats; America looked upon them as the cradle of a great and purely American merchant marine. From the 2d of August, 1917, the United States commandeered everything: shipyards, tonnage building and tonnage afloat. The United States even took back the steel cargo boats that I had ordered in May. Later it restricted us to wooden bottoms. For weeks it refused to charter the tonnage I needed on the ground

that the condition of our ports and their methods were unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, we managed to obtain, under the French flag, 37,000 tons of steel and 270,000 tons of wooden shipping intended for Channel and Mediterranean transport, which brought over 200,000 tons of wheat and nitrates on their first voyage; and, under the American flag, 36,000 tons of German cargo boats, 90,000 of American cargo boats, and 145,000 tons of tankers.[1] But after what endless discussions, what careful adjustments!

Then what of finance, the sinews of this war of industry and coalition? Without means of payment in dollars — and since November, 1916, such means of payment had been lacking — the Allies would have been beaten before the end of 1917. America's entry into the war saved them. Before the American soldier, the American dollar turned the tide. Every one rushed to this opening source. But it did not flow freely. The United States was unprepared to absorb the Liberty Loans that the Government was to float to help its associates. The banks were unprepared to sell the bonds on a market which had hitherto always borrowed. From 1914 to 1917, we had been able to raise, in Wall Street and elsewhere, only some $685,000,000. To make up our purchases we had been obliged to borrow $224,000,000 from England, and in April, 1917, England herself was overdrawn some $400,000,000. After the note of the Federal Reserve

[1] Thus by November, 1917, we managed to increase our monthly shipments from 240,000 tons to 500,000 tons. The 140,000 tons of oil brought over in January and February, 1917, enabled our motor transport to carry up the units which in March filled the gap left when the enemy broke through the British army.

Board,[1] the American market had been closed to us. The relations of our financial agents with the American banks were more than strained.

At last the law which authorized the Treasury to make advances was voted. For Europe, what a stream of gold! But its approaches were crowded. Banker of her Allies since 1914, England came first. France, who had suffered more than England, wanted to be served equally well. The others pressed behind, a clamouring crowd whose enormous estimates frightened the Treasury officials. In Paris a bouquet of illusions bloomed, only to fade immediately. On the strength of a press dispatch, the 'Give France $1,000,000,000' campaign raised hopes which were soon blasted. After conversations rife with misunderstanding between our Ambassador and the Secretary of the Treasury, the misplaced hope of preferential treatment for France which had never been promised. After M. Viviani's brief mission, the mirage of a definite undertaking to supply France with $150,000,000 a month, together with an alleged promise to meet our payments in London. On my first visit to the Treasury on May 18, 1917, this dream picture vanished. Associated, but not Allied, the United States had authorized its Secretary of the Treasury to grant advances to Europe, but not to enter into definite undertakings. There were to be no bilateral negotiations, no general agreements, no mutual stipulations. The United States in financial matters was to play the part of distributor and arbitrator. That was to be its financial policy.

[1] See Chapter III.

This independent policy was justified and strengthened by the unbridled competition of the borrowers, by their ever-outstretched hands, by the astuteness of their ever-increasing demands.[1] American mistrust increased when, in June, both London and Paris, on the ground of their financial autonomy, stubbornly opposed the American proposal for an interallied finance board. Henceforth only short-term credits were opened to us, first month by month, then fortnight by fortnight. Only once, in November, thanks to the Paris Conference, to which Northcliffe and I were both summoned, were we able to obtain for France and England two months' credit at once. Every day my Government called upon me to obtain regular agreements, which it considered indispensable. Every day the Treasury told me, as it told my colleagues, that it did not intend to enter into any binding agreements. The American Congress had limited the object, the amount, the form of financial assistance. No one could complain that this assistance was not forthcoming. But no one had the right to count upon it.

To the end of the war France was never to lack a dollar. During the thirty-two months of American neutrality, France, by paying 7 per cent and at times 11 and 12 per cent, had raised only $685,000,000 in New York banks and was, besides, in debt to Great Britain. During the next twenty months, France

[1] In the middle of the month of July, the American Treasury had available for the Allies to the end of 1917 a sum of $1,800,000,000. The monthly demand then exceeded $400,000,000, so that there was a shortage of $600,000,000 to the end of the year. It was necessary to vote fresh resources.

received $2,985,000,000 at less than 5 per cent. Thanks to these advances, she was able to repay her debt to England, to repay half of what she had borrowed in America during the days of neutrality, to pay for all her purchases in the United States, to transfer to the British Treasury the amount of purchases it made for her in dollars or sterling, and to meet the needs of the Bank of France to enable French business to carry on, as well as to maintain the parity of exchange, when, all the while, supplementary receipts were being derived from sales to the Expeditionary Forces in France.

It was a generous and magnificent, but by no means an easy financial achievement. What vexations our constantly granted requests entailed! If to spare Allied credit the costly renewal of loans made in neutral days, I used my monthly advances to repay them, approval of my course was heavily coated with remonstrance. If, to maintain the parity of the franc, our Minister of Finance asked for extra assistance, the refusal of a gold deposit was followed by a conditional advance only after two months of negotiation. When the francs we supplied to the American army furnished us with an additional resource, an interminable discussion arose between the two Treasuries as to what was to be done. Washington wanted to deduct the amount from its monthly payments; Paris maintained it was entitled to keep both. In the end we always managed to agree. But always the first impulse was one of mutual contradiction, and it was a long, long way from initial contradiction to final agreement.

Already the contrast of our mentalities was clear. During the war, it was overcome by the pressure of events and the will of men, but it foreshadowed trouble for the future. On the one side, French logic; on the other, Anglo-Saxon empiricism. With us, the hope that we could bind the United States by definite undertakings; in America, the unswerving determination to be bound only for the present. Even the giving of the bonds, in respect to the Allied debt, led to inextricable debates. In the summer of 1917, my Financial Service raised the question: there was no reply; then, a formal refusal to discuss the matter. The Treasury feared a pitfall; feared that England would obtain priority of repayment, that France sought special advantages. Hampered by their need of daily assistance, the Allies were in no position to discuss, and by their lack of a common policy they increased the mistrust. England was anxious that terms of repayment should be settled at once. France sought to link the debt settlement with reparations. The United States, without assenting to either proposal, waited till the day when electoral considerations prompted it to adopt the most brutal attitude, that of the threatening ultimatum of February, 1919. But that is another story.

The same phenomenon was in evidence everywhere; the war effort was complicated by the reactions of public opinion and required psychological adjustment. The Catholics wrongly criticized the use to which the French Government was putting the funds collected for war orphans. The Jews reproached France with her lack of sympathy for Zionism. Privations

the American people so magnificently endured to help the Allies prompted a campaign against French waste. Even to our internal disputes, which caused anxiety for the safety of the American Expeditionary Force. 'Take action,' we were urged during the defeatist campaign, 'take action against the accused or against the accusers.' Every mail from France, bringing letters from newly landed soldiers, inexperienced witnesses of our feverish excitement, after a reverse at the front or a tumult in the Chamber, spread a wave of discouragement on the other side of the ocean.

From first to last during my mission, I felt achievement influenced by invisible forces; day after day I had to combat them. In May, 1917, I was faced with the insidious campaign which represented France as 'bled white,' incapable of holding till the arrival of the American army.[1] In the following spring, I had to cope with the panic started by the disaster

[1] To put an end to this campaign, I sent a letter to the Secretary of War on the resources of France. It was published and placarded from one end of the States to the other. At other times, after having stressed our potentialities, we had to insist upon the enormity of our means. For instance, this cable sent by me from Paris in December, 1917, to M. de Billy: 'Make the American Government understand that we are about to enter upon an extremely difficult period. A heavy German attack on our front with reënforcements brought from Russia is almost certain before the end of the winter. Our army was never in better condition, nor was its morale ever higher. Lay stress upon that; it is the absolute truth. But for France to hold without risk of surprises, we need men, cereals, gasoline, and steel. So the United States must make a great effort at once. 1. Hasten the arrival of troops. 2. Get wheat to the docks and apply to war transport 500,000 tons of shipping taken from commandeered vessels. 3. Take from Standard Oil eight or ten tank steamers. 4. Load steel on all troop transports. See Colonel House. Give him this cable. Tell him that I am convinced that the issue depends on the next six months.'

of the British Fourth Army. All day long on March 22d, Lord Reading and I received a succession of anxious visits and appeals. That evening, at the Tricolor Ball given for war charities at the New Willard Hotel, as the only Allied representative present, I had to reply to looks and questions of alarm. The next day in New York, I learned, as did the public, of the bombardment of Paris. The Allied army experts were unanimous in asserting that no cannon in the world could possibly fire a distance of more than sixty miles and so the newspapers jumped to the conclusion that, as no such guns existed, the *communiqués* must be false and the Germans within twenty miles of Paris. On Monday a storm threatened at the opening of the New York Stock Exchange. To maintain the parity of the franc, I was obliged to intervene. The same anxiety made itself felt again two months later, after the Germans broke through on the Chemin des Dames.

All these daily difficulties and exceptional crises were overcome — the shipping crisis in November, 1917, the oil crisis in December, the coal crisis in January, 1918, the food crisis in March, the reënforcement crisis in April. They were overcome by the invincible will to conquer and by well-ordered efforts which were to furnish a triumphant answer to the dangerous antinomy of American and European needs, to the deep-seated contrasts of mentality, of methods, of feelings.[1] Had America, in her haste to arm herself, allowed Europe to be beaten for lack

[1] I raised the question of antinomy in May 26, 1917, in a memorandum addressed to Mr. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury.

of food; had America, by helping Europe to excess, delayed her own arrival at the front: in either case defeat was inevitable. The pressure of moral factors favoured defeat, for self was the first thought of each. Victory sprang from the conciliation of opposite tendencies.

The United States was the first to bow to this necessity. It was in no way prepared so to do, for to no country is centralization more repugnant. Yet by the autumn of 1917, centralization was an accomplished fact. It found expression in half a dozen great boards of control: War Industries Board, Shipping Board, Food Administration, War Trade Board, Fuel Administration, Railroad Administration, Committee on Public Information. These domineering controllers of the economic and intellectual life of the United States left a bad taste in the mouths of many citizens; yet they were the price of victory. Thanks to their control, a market glutted with orders, a market in which unbridled competition had led to an insane increase in prices, was reduced to order within a few weeks, with equality of treatment for all and a general fall in prices. Every need of America, every need of Europe, was satisfied. Demand here and supply there were adjusted to one another. Government, taking over factories and regulating transportation, became the absolute master of all production and distribution. An undreamed of America was being created for the purpose of war.

This new America imposed the same law of uniformity upon its associates. Without Woodrow Wilson's support, I dare not say that the Supreme

Command would ever have been instituted.[1] The same was true in other matters. When Americans fall in love with an idea, even if their enthusiasm does not last, it is always intense. In 1917 and 1918, they had a passion for the organization of interallied war machinery, the weight of which was not always borne gladly by Europe. McAdoo did not succeed in forcing absolute financial unity, although with Northcliffe and myself he had drawn up plans for it, and doubtless the debtors lost more than the creditors. But in every other field the Americans finally had their way. After America's entry into the war, the interallied boards in London and Paris, boards of control for steel, wood, oil, wheat, food, shipping, assumed their definite form and produced their best results. After four years of experiment and dispersion, control reached something in the nature of perfection towards the end of 1918. Had the war lasted another year, the machinery would have been running with incredible smoothness.

In turn each of the Allies felt the influence of this control. To secure the working of the methods it had imposed, the United States insisted that Europe should follow suit. It demanded the official inter-

[1] In January, 1918, on my return from Paris, where, in order to continue my work in America, I had refused a portfolio in the Clemenceau Cabinet, I had the following conversation with President Wilson about the Supreme Command. The President, to whom I pointed out the difficulties attendant upon such a measure, replied: 'You will have to come to it, just the same. What does Mr. Clemenceau think?' 'He is thoroughly in favour of it,' I said. 'Whom does he suggest?' asked the President. I answered, 'General Foch.' By his influence on England, Mr. Wilson from that moment never ceased to pave the way for the decision reached in March, 1918.

vention of the country concerned for all exports. It reserved the right to modify all contracts as to quantities, specifications, prices, and even the choice of manufacturer. It delivered purchasing licenses only on a double declaration by an Allied Government that the export was essential and that tonnage was available to carry it to Europe. Subjected to this system, Europe was obliged to assume like authority over its nationals, for whom it was responsible. This led to those unpopular organizations known in France as 'consortiums,' which were the instruments of official authority. Through them monopolizing and speculation, the two banes of war economy, were made virtually impossible. Important savings were made. Towards the end of the war, the final stages of this prolonged organized effort gave the non-initiated the illusion that interallied coöperation was easy. It was not!

France, in order to do her share, was obliged to build up an enormous organization. In May, 1917, French services in America presented a spectacle of anarchy. There were independent missions not only from every Government department, but from different services of the same department. There was an artillery mission, an engineering mission, an aviation mission, a railroad mission, a naval construction mission, all of which claimed joyful independence, corresponded directly with Paris, and competed against each other, sending the price of steel to ever-dizzier heights. At the end of 1916, something in the nature of centralization had been attempted, but evil habits still prevailed. In June, 1917, however,

everything was organized. The various departments were all under a single direction, which alone had the right to give the signature of France. Each of our ten services did its own business directly with the American authorities, but all received their impetus from the same source. A staff of three hundred Americans and nine hundred French carried on the work of this living organization. Between May, 1917, and November, 1918, the French High Commission in the United States handled some three billion dollars and exchanged more than fifty thousand cables with the Paris Government.

This material effort was supplemented by psychological action. In addition to their technical duties, I required each of my collaborators to accomplish a moral and political task: to be, in the United States, an exponent of French life. Not in the indiscreet and dangerous form of propaganda, but by returning a sound and logical answer to every question about France. From a central bureau in Washington there emanated ideas, facts, and figures. It was in constant contact with the Committee on Public Information, the national lecturers, the Four-Minute Men, the Rotary Clubs, the recognized or inspired interpreters of official thought. From this office, our four hundred military instructors, our two hundred factory inspectors, who were everywhere in close contact with local life, received every week a substantial telegram which furnished them with information and ideas. Whenever a meeting was organized by any one of the countless bodies which shape public opinion in the United States, one of our men was there, ready, if necessary,

to assert the rights or explain the motives of France. In this way more than sixteen thousand speeches were delivered in English. Countless misunderstandings were avoided by this wholesale expression of our national aims and aspirations.

All my life I shall remember the United States as it then was. A vast war machine, quickened by patriotism; its soul aflame; one hundred million men, women, and children with every nerve strained towards the ports of embarkation; chimneys smoking; trains rushing through the warm nights; women in the stations offering hot coffee to troops on their way to the front; national hymns rising to heaven; meetings for Liberty Loans in every church, in every theatre, at every street corner; immense posters on the walls, 'You are in it, you must win it.' Immense and unhoped for achievement which despite the extremity of our peril and the righteousness of our cause had demanded weeks and months of preparation. In order to understand one another, to adjust both principles and their application, it had been necessary to adapt, to explain, to coördinate. The triumph of this adjustment spelled success. Haphazard methods would have meant failure.

II

Drifting

As soon as the armistice was signed, a dual tendency became manifest: the weakening of centripetal and the strengthening of centrifugal forces. The end of the war, the disruption of war organizations, the awakening of economic interests, the conflict of political ideals, the restoration of the empire of old habits, were the underlying causes of the phenomena. The mistakes of men did the rest.

I have explained the origin of those disagreements in writing the story of the Peace Conference.[1] Fifteen months of preparatory work made it impossible for me to share the surprise of most of my colleagues when brought face to face with them. I remembered the summer of 1917, when the vast majority of American public opinion refused to understand our claim to Alsace-Lorraine; when the Inquiry[2] suggested a plebiscite by sections, splitting up the two provinces into a dozen fragments. I knew that, even after the Fourteen Points of January 8, 1918, which reflected our own war aims and constituted such a real advance for us, many other opportunities of disagreement would occur. It suffices to mention President Wilson's stubborn scruples against military occupation of any kind, his uncompromising theories, in blind ignorance of European facts, about plebiscites, the tragic debate over the Sarre, which nearly

[1] *The Truth about the Treaty*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1921.

[2] An official body appointed to inquire into the terms of peace.

led to a breakdown of the negotiations. The policy of association, so difficult of application in war-time, proved neither less arduous nor less stormy once the war was over.

Despite such disagreements, later events have made us regret those days — the only ones, from the armistice to the present day, when France could rely upon American support. During the crises of the Peace Conference, President Wilson, except on one or two occasions, proved himself a staunch supporter and honest friend of France. Without him, in April, 1919, we could never have overcome Lloyd George's opposition to the occupation of the Rhine. Thanks to him, in May, we were able to save Upper Silesia from the grasp of Germany. Above all, it was his support which, in June, 1919, enabled us to break down England's opposition to all the treaty clauses: territorial, military, political, and financial. Woodrow Wilson had a strict and often imperative conception of the duties of the United States to Europe. At least he disclaimed detachment, such as his successors have shown. When he fell, struck down by paralysis, he had just entered on a campaign for the ratification of the treaty and participation by the United States in the political responsibilities born of victory and of the peace.

And yet, even in those fleeting days of union, the bonds slackened. Economic interests, so prone to egotism, were the first battleground. When the war ended, the United States found itself in a changed situation. Formerly a debtor nation, it had become a creditor. Its monetary circulation had increased

from three billion dollars to six. Its gold holdings had risen from two billion to four. Bank deposits had increased from thirteen billion to twenty-five. Prices had trebled. Its production, agricultural as well as industrial, had enormously increased. Proud of its success, the United States was determined to profit by it. Prouder still of its strength, it was determined to make it felt. In its optimism, it saw a simple solution for the problem. The reconstruction of ruined Europe was to make the fortune of untouched America for the good of Europe itself. To sell to Europe, away with war-time control, which had laid its mailed fist upon the law of supply and demand. There was to be 'fresh and joyous' competition at home and abroad. Factories, railroads, shipping, were to break loose from the heavy restraints of inter-allied control, and according to tradition, executive intervention was to be reduced to a minimum, equality of opportunity restored, and might the best man win.

Both parties vied in this, so keen, so truly country-wide was the demand for a return to freedom. Democrats and Republicans alike attacked the Administration. To satisfy his supporters, the cotton and wheat growers of the South and West, as well as to placate his opponents, the iron and steel and banking interests of the East, which had just scored against him in the congressional elections of November, 1918, Woodrow Wilson agreed to the restoration of untrammelled competition. In a few weeks the inter-allied boards of control disappeared. Raw materials, transportation, exchanges were liberated from State

control. Was not the armistice signed? Amid general rejoicing, no one asked whether this sufficed to restore to 'normalcy' conditions produced by five years of storm. Neither did any one ask whether the expected buyers would respond to the vendors' hopes, nor whether trade, instead of being increased, would not be killed. Export prices rose with a bound. When the immediate consequences made themselves felt — the fall of European exchanges, the narrowing of markets, lack of outlets, unemployment, strikes, etc. — America laid the blame on Europe.

This American mistake was to be matched — and parallel instances will not be lacking — by a French mistake which only added to the first. At the very time when the United States gave itself up to unrestricted production, we closed the French market to America. I have already referred to my negotiations with William Gibbs McAdoo in November, 1918, for French reconstruction credits, and also to the refusal of the French Government, of which I was a member, to avail itself of such credits for a work it had planned and was carrying out on a strictly protectionist basis.[1] During the early months of 1919, the leaders of American industry all came to Paris. They made offers to my colleagues, offers fully in keeping with the credits we had been promised. They found closed doors. One after the other, they met with polite but firm refusals. They went home convinced that there was nothing doing in France. In May, the bill for credits introduced in the House of Representatives

[1] See pages 180–181.

in November was withdrawn. The date is worth remembering. To America saying, 'I want to sell,' France replied, 'I am not buying.' That common interest, so essential in Anglo-Saxon countries to common aspirations, was shattered. Henceforth nothing linked the United States to the material or financial progress of our reconstruction. Between us there was but one business tie — a dead and putrid tie — our debts. Of which more anon.

If business men returned disgruntled, the soldiers went home dissatisfied. France had done everything to prevent this disappointment. Officers and soldiers had been welcomed by our universities and had lived in our families; personal tributes, decorations, diplomas, medals, souvenirs, had been given to the soldiers lavishly. But of the two million men who had crossed the seas to fight, only a portion had tasted of battle. Those who actually fought cherished sentiments of affection and respect for their French comrades, but they were not more than a third of the total. The others who, when the armistice came, were still in camp, or those who, in the service of supplies, had seen only the drudgery of war and none of its glory, went back disgusted with their long stays in our poverty-stricken villages, filled with that mingled disillusionment and disgust men feel for barrack life. Spectators of great things, they had seen them only from afar and through the wrong end of the telescope. We relied upon them as witnesses of our trials; we found in them only critics who complained of extortionate prices and out-of-date methods. Forgetting, amid the outbursts of official eloquence, that

their country had gone to war for itself and not for us, they indignantly complained of what they regarded as the extortion of those they had come to save. To what extent public sentiment was warped is strikingly shown by the ineradicable legend of the hired trenches. For months, for years, people have said and are still saying that the American army was made to pay rent for the trenches it occupied in France. Whence could such an absurd rumour have sprung? From the inventories every force signed when taking over a new sector? From the tallies kept between the quartermaster's departments for shells, guns, aeroplanes, transportation? No one has ever been able to find out. But the poison spread. Neither denials by the French Government, nor by the American command, were able to stem the tide of falsehood. Even in August, 1925, a speaker who was presenting the case for France before a cultured and well-informed audience at Williams College was called upon for an explanation on this subject. Millions of men have believed, and continue to believe, that France charged them for the blood they shed upon her soil. In every class, from top to bottom of the social ladder, disaffection spread apace.[1] It only needed politics to take a hand to make the cleavage complete.

And politics did take a hand. Even at the Peace Conference repeated discussions ruffled the feelings

[1] Conflicts of persons had, so to speak, never ceased. Thus immediately after the armistice I had great difficulty in putting an end to the dispute which had arisen between the staffs of Marshal Foch and General Pershing over the organization of the Coblenz bridgehead.

of both sides, and one by one deprived us of our supporters. I do not refer specially to the leaders. They, even in their worst differences, retained a mutual respect for opposing points of view and for the men who defended them. But among the rank and file there was no such restraint. Subordinate members of the American delegation threw oil on the fire raging around the left bank of the Rhine or the Sarre, whispered aloud that the breaking-up of the Conference was certain when it was merely a possibility, announced the President's return home and the resumption by the United States of its splendid isolation. Once agreement was reached, they accused President Wilson of having betrayed his principles; they accused France of having tricked him. They spread throughout the world the absurd fiction of an imperialist France anxious to crucify Germany, of a resigned Wilson willing to accept everything rather than not sign the Peace. This initial conflict is at the bottom of a campaign which our subsequent concessions have not succeeded in disarming. The left wing of the Democratic Party was henceforth against us. Anti-French, and, because anti-French, anti-Wilson, it reminded the United States of first principles, — a cult which was not to lack popularity.

At the same time, the battle waged in France against Clemenceau dealt Wilson not a few of the blows intended for his colleague. Wilson had been painted as a docile plaything in the hands of Clemenceau; now Clemenceau was accused of having been the passive instrument of Wilson. The French campaign, designed to restore to power pre-war politicians, made

common cause with the American campaign to bring the Republican Party back to office. In order to undo Wilson, the American colony in Paris, nearly all Republicans, furnished arguments to the French campaign against Clemenceau. This alliance gave birth to the murderous charge that France had been ill defended by its Government against the autocratic insistence of a pro-German visionary. Wilson Democrats were indignant to see an important section of the French press arrayed against them. They upbraided us for having betrayed the man who saved us, for passing from servile admiration to libellous ingratitude. What love for France remained among them was badly shaken. The second half of the Democratic Party, in turn, was lost to France.

Was Republican support to compensate the loss of Democratic friendship? No! The very force of things made that impossible. Encouraged by its success of November, 1918,[1] the Republican Party, just before the 1920 campaign, was seeking a platform issue. Home politics could furnish none, for the country was resplendently proud and prosperous. An issue had to be sought in foreign affairs. The error of trying to use international problems for party purposes is traditional in the United States. The beginnings of American history were poisoned by foreign factionalism. In 1849, Secretary of State Clayton did not hesitate to rely upon the British Minister against the Senate, and the opposite has also happened. Immigration and the foreign vote have but increased the

[1] At the congressional elections in November, 1918, the Democratic administration had lost its majority in both houses.

tendency. To obtain both an issue and votes, the opposition directed its attacks against the Treaty of Versailles. An issue! Since the Democrats, by party discipline, were bound to support the Wilson peace, the Republicans would be against it. Votes! The votes of all the immigrants, German, Austrian, Italian, Irish, Bulgarian, whose atavistic aspirations had been disappointed by the treaty. The rules of the electoral game so dictated, and they were supreme. Neither sentiment nor doctrine had anything to do with it.

No anti-French feeling inspired the Republicans. Among them, many firm friends of France attacked the Wilson Treaty without realizing that France would suffer if the peace were rejected. On the contrary, they thought to serve her. An extraordinary illusion, defying all facts and reason, coupled in their minds the downfall of Wilson with the good of France. At the very time when a separate peace with Germany was being prepared, these men were making speeches in which the triumph of the party about to sign this separate peace was heralded as a blessing. A Republican victory meant, according to them, that France and the United States would get on together without difficulty, that war debts would be cancelled, that Germany would be made to pay, that French peace would reign over the world. The majority of those who spoke thus did so in good faith. Nothing is more human than to believe what one desires. 'It is,' as Bossuet said, 'the worst of mental aberrations'; but it is also the most common. In the electoral campaign, the necessities of victory obliged the Repub-

licans to injure France by destroying solidarity. Most of them knew not what they were doing.

They were no more guided by tradition than by feeling. To listen to them in 1920 one would have thought that isolation had always been a Republican policy. Nothing more false. From 1912 on, and in every platform of the Republican Party since, the League of Nations has had its place. Without going back to the time of Blaine or Hay,[1] recent facts are eloquent. On August 28, 1916, the United States Senate by unanimous vote called upon the President to place himself at the head of a league of the nations. In innumerable speeches Henry Cabot Lodge lauded such a body.[2] Theodore Roosevelt appealed again and again for a world league.[3] Unanimously in favour of the League, the Republicans were equally against any separate peace. Lodge in the spring of 1918 denounced it as dishonourable and ruinous.[4] Roosevelt wrote that if Wilson did not make peace side by side with the Allies, he would be nothing but a deceiver.[5] But prin-

[1] Blaine had spoken in favour of 'that wider patriotism, which is the brotherhood of Nations.' John Hay asserted that 'immediately after independence, the dominant factor is interdependence.'

[2] Henry Cabot Lodge in 1916: 'We must find some way in which the united forces of the nations could be put behind the cause of peace and law.' And again: 'This world league has the highest of all aims for the benefit of humanity.'

[3] Theodore Roosevelt: 'The great civilized nations of the world should combine by solemn agreement in a great world league for the Peace of Righteousness.'

[4] Henry Cabot Lodge (June, 1918): 'To make a separate peace would brand us with everlasting dishonour.'

[5] Theodore Roosevelt (July, 1918): 'Unless we stand by our allies who have stood by us, we shall have failed in making the liberty of well-behaved civilized peoples secure and we shall have shown that our announcement about making the world safe for democracy was an empty boast.'

ciples went the way of feelings. As soon as it appeared politically expedient, the whole Party united as one man against the League of Nations and against the Peace of Solidarity.

To justify its attitude the Republican party appealed to tradition, to the mainspring of tradition: the political immorality of Europe. 'No foreign entanglements!' The slogan of George Washington, of Thomas Jefferson, of James Madison, of James Monroe was familiar to all Americans. What better condemnation of Wilson's compromise could there be? Recall the circumstances: The long and difficult peace negotiations which had given rise to so many and such serious clashes of interest and ideals had just been concluded. What an opportunity to harp upon the rapacity of European countries, their territorial greed, their unquenchable national conflicts! In the centre of the picture France, painted by newspapers of various political hues as the heir in 1919 of Prussian militarism. Let us be Americans, one hundred per cent Americans! Leave to their own quarrels associates who show that they are incapable of understanding the Gospel of Justice! That was the part of historical truth, of moral dignity, of political wisdom. The indictment of Europe formed the basis of the decision to return to isolation. The situation was not the same as after the War of Independence; but the desire for isolation was just as keen. In one case as in the other, so much the worse for France.

An incomprehensible reversal of policy, it has been said. Incomprehensible only for those who do not

know the violence of political passion in the United States and the utter indifference of its people to foreign affairs. The United States is a land in which domestic considerations always prevail over foreign ones. Slow to become involved, Americans at all periods of their history have always been quick to release themselves from entanglements. They have never bothered about continuity of international policy. A change of majority suffices to free them, and they have no fear of reversing themselves.

I have recalled the events of 1783. Their reverberations may be traced in the relations of the United States with Mexico or with China. The plea of 'special interest,' rejected when France put it forward in connection with the Rhineland, was advanced by the United States against Spain in connection with Cuba. Holland, in 1918, saw herself refused by the United States, which had become a belligerent, the very rights which the United States as a neutral had demanded of Great Britain. American diplomacy is empirical. It reminds one of a saying of James Bryce, who knew America well: 'It is a question whether democratic institutions are compatible with the respect of international undertakings.' By sacrificing their inclinations, their principles, their promises to party advantage, the Republicans were true to American political habits. To be shocked over this is quite as futile as to be angry about it.

This feeling was so strong that it led individuals and the party further than they wanted to go, led them to extremes which at first they had not foreseen.

Senator Lodge and Senator Smoot had begun their attacks upon the Treaty by mere reservations which they believed would be sufficient to defeat Wilson's aims without jeopardizing a settlement in common. Within a few weeks they were swamped; and from reservations they passed to a separate treaty. Wilson was beaten, so it was no longer political expediency but the force of things that impelled them. Senator Knox had started the ball rolling with his resolution.

The speech in which Senator Harding, on July 22, 1920, accepted the Republican nomination for the Presidency, cut the bridges with the past: 'I promise you,' he said, 'formal and effective peace, so quickly as a Republican Congress can pass its declaration for a Republican Executive to sign.' To make it with whom? With Germany. And the separate treaties of 1921, the work of Lodge's party, gave effect to what Lodge in 1918 had branded as ruin and dishonour. One thing led to another. The campaign against the treaty had won the hyphenated vote for the Republicans, and those voters had claims. The principle had won support. Support strengthened the principle. The 'associated Government' of 1917 was to sign a separate treaty with Germany, taking the profits of peace, but rejecting its burdens.

To so many adverse circumstances due to American causes, France by her own acts added others. To begin with, France backed the wrong horse. Although the Republicans were tending towards that separate peace which the Democrats denounced as a new Brest-Litovsk, as 'an insult to those who served

in that whirlwind of war and a denial of our national purpose,'[1] the vast majority of the French people hoped for the victory of the Republicans and the defeat of the Democrats. Can this be explained by the vain promises with which we were lulled? No. The truth is that in those tragic hours the play of French internal politics and of American internal politics was interwoven. Between the victorious opponents of Clemenceau and of Wilson an unholy alliance had sprung up. The two campaigns gave each other mutual support. And France, carried away by the same mistaken enthusiasm as so many of her allies, was eager to acclaim the victory of the American party which was opposed to the Treaty and pregnant with a separate peace. An historical error, following on that of 1916, which joined all the political forces of the United States against us: the Republicans because their platform demanded it, the Democrats because their feelings had been outraged.

The only thing left to lose was the esteem of the masses. We lost it when the French Parliament dismissed Clemenceau. The general public in the United States could not be expected to possess an exact knowledge of European politics. It was familiar with the names of two or three outstanding figures. The 'Tiger' was the legendary hero of France. The day the blow which struck him down was dealt, the American people felt that a tie between them and France had snapped. The same cry of anger arose from the

[1] Speeches of Messrs. Cox and Franklin Roosevelt, Democratic candidates for the Presidency and the Vice-Presidency.

newspapers in the great cities as from the country weeklies in the South and West. A sentence from an Ohio paper sums up this outburst of public opinion: 'The overthrow of the "Tiger" has wiped out part of the esteem felt for France.' After that, popular feeling was either hostile to France or indifferent. Lloyd George, who was anything but a sentimentalist, said: 'It's the French who are burning Joan of Arc now.' After big business, after the soldiers, after the politicians, the man in the street was turning away from us. Four orders of events were, in less than five years, to transform this cleavage into an abysmal chasm.

Six months after the conclusion of the separate peace treaties, the Washington Conference of December, 1921, for the reduction of naval armaments opened. It left France and the United States at loggerheads. France was peeved at America; America was peeved at France. Conscious of being a danger to none, conscious of our naval traditions and of the duties imposed upon us by the extent of our coast line and by our colonial Empire of sixty million inhabitants, we bitterly resented the accusation of imperialism and the manner in which our delegation was treated. Our deception was all the more bitter because a complacent press had led France to believe that, rid of Clemenceau, she could expect everything from the United States, rid of Wilson. The effect was such that eighteen months elapsed before any one dared present the agreements for ratification to the Chambers. In America equal rancour prevailed. We gained the reputation of mili-

tarism, as well as of being weak. We were, the paper said, 'the only nation which refused to disarm.' Mark Sullivan wrote: 'France has acted badly. She has obstructed a great and ideal undertaking. The part she has played cannot and will not be forgiven.' Another wrote: 'France has ceased to be our well-beloved.' One of our best friends, Elmer Roberts, added: 'I who knew you so different, I no longer understand you.' Henceforth American pacifism was arrayed against us.

After pacificism, evangelicalism. The Christian feeling which, rising above creeds draws them closer together, took sides against us in connection with events in the Near East. France, in the summer of 1921, had supported Turkey to offset the pro-Greek intrigues of Great Britain. English mistakes were matched by French mistakes. On both sides there was the same lack of measure. But the American public, brought up to despise the Turk, paid attention only to French mistakes and denounced France as the protector of the Crescent against the Cross. France was accused of sacrificing the Christians by the very nation which in refusing the Armenian mandate had washed its hands of their defence. France was denounced as the ally of barbarians against civilization, denounced in the churches, denounced in the press. France was hissed in the moving-picture theatres, and the British fleet was greeted with cheers. The missionary spirit also was arrayed against us.

Then came the occupation of the Ruhr. The evolution of American public opinion during that twelve-

month is most instructive. At first and by habit we were accused of grinding peaceful Germany beneath the heel of militarism. Later, when the occupation had been successfully carried out, it was admitted that if the United States had been in the place of France it would have done as we did, and our seizure of the second iron district of the world somewhat restored our prestige. Senator David A. Reed, the American Legion, Dr. Henry van Dyke, former Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, Governor H. R. Allen, President Harry Pratt Judson, the *New York Tribune*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Boston Transcript*, the *Providence Journal* were among those who paid tribute to our 'efficiency.' But this state of mind did not survive the end of the occupation.

Now we come to the debt discussion. I have traced its origins in the war and post-armistice periods.[1] Months passed, and years; sleeping debts were allowed to lie. From time to time a French minister would proclaim our desire to pay and our inability to give effect to that desire. Or else some member of Parliament would repudiate the very principle of our debt by talking about the number of our dead, the importance of our front, the extent of our ruins — all of

[1] See above, page 243. It was in February, 1919, that the American Government first flatly refused to allow any discussion of a general debt settlement. The matter having been placed upon the agenda of the Financial Commission of the Peace Conference, Mr. Rathbone, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, notified the Allies that 'the American Government would never consent to any discussion upon this subject.' He added that the credits still necessary to all European Powers would be immediately withdrawn from those who showed themselves in favour of a general settlement.

which we knew, alas, when we accepted the advances. Other nations settled their debts, and began their payments. France waited. And while she waited, France borrowed at eight and ten per cent from Wall Street, and the politicians in America said: 'The French leave our people to bear an interest of four per cent, and they pay more than twice as much to money dealers in New York.' The veterans blamed France for the delay in obtaining their bonus. The taxpayers blamed France because their burdens were not reduced. The debt question, like the treaty itself, became a party issue. There was a debt to be collected. More power to the party that could get it paid. The question became political rather than economic and international.

Not once in this discussion did France put forward the arguments or seize the opportunities which events placed within her reach. In none of the successive encounters treating of the debt question did France advance the political argument which dominates the financial discussion. I do not refer to the countless speeches [1] in which Democrats and Republicans alike asserted, in both Houses, that the advances to the Allies had served to save American lives and that such being the case the question of repayment was negligible. I refer to the fact that the United States having made these advances officially as an associate in a common cause was not

[1] See in particular the speeches of Senators McCumber, Smoot, Kenyon, Cummins, and of Representatives Mann, Fordney, Mondell, Kitchin, Fitzgerald, Rainey, La Guardia, and Madden, some of them Republicans, others Democrats.

entitled after having abandoned its associates to demand repayment without a thorough revision of the amounts involved.

Turn to paragraph 8 of the Fourteen Points, applauded by the whole Congress; turn to the terms of the Armistice; even to the separate peace with Germany: reparations invariably appear; and Carter Glass's letter of January, 1919, admitted the connection which exists between German reparations and the French debt.[1] In 1920, the United States had the right to repudiate its former war aims— that was a legal luxury it could afford; but it had no right to make its allies pay the price. France, prepared to pay the United States three billion dollars when, with American assistance, she was to collect thirty-two billion dollars from Germany cannot remain saddled with the same debt if, by the fault of the United States, the amount she is to receive is reduced by three quarters. That is an issue of common sense, of fair play, which France has never raised.

There was one rift in these clouds: Clemenceau's visit to the United States at the end of 1922. When, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York the Great Old Man of France got into touch with the public, he said: 'If we had known that we were to be left in the lurch by English ill-will and American indifference, we should not have signed the armistice. . . . You came too late and you withdrew too

[1] This letter of January 29, 1919, was worded as follows: 'I am entirely agreed that the plan of repayments of the loans made by the United States must take into account the amounts the French Government can probably collect from the enemy.'

soon. . . . You had the right to withdraw. But not, when you had gone, to make a separate peace without even trying to reach an agreement. . . . It was you who laid down the terms on which you were willing to cease war. Those terms were not and are not complied with. . . . Of all your war aims, tell me which you have attained.' And in conclusion, this lofty summing up of unfulfilled destiny: 'Remember a nation may be the prisoner of its own greatness. It cannot choose to be great in history one day and small the next.' This strong and gentle appeal made the United States look within itself and upon Europe. There was a mingling of astonishment and regret, a desire for introspection which it would have been easy to kindle and make glow.

This is where we stand in 1926. Two great nations which I have seen so splendidly able to work together are parted further asunder than at any time in their history. The contact of their citizens repels rather than attracts. How few weigh things and apportion the responsibilities of each; how few say with Baruch, 'Our attitude in 1920 forbids us to criticize what followed'; or with House, 'No nation ever rejected more lightly a greater heritage.'[1] If this picture appears too dark, here is the testimony of the American who knows Europe best and is most friendly to France, Frank H. Simonds: 'It is impossible,' he

[1] In this connection one must note the absurd comparison so often drawn between the American income tax, which represents the totality of the Federal Government revenues derived from direct taxation, and our schedular and general income taxes, which do not represent a sixth of the revenues derived from direct taxation by the French Government, the other five sixths being derived from taxes which do not exist in the United States.

wrote at the end of 1923, 'to imagine a greater or more complete misunderstanding than that which exists to-day between the American public and the French public.' What was true in 1923 is even more painfully true in 1926.

III

Upstream

Deep and complete as was this misunderstanding, at times and by certain methods it was tempered by some measure of relief and comprehension. Let us turn from the curve of public relations between France and the United States to that of private relations. On the whole the two follow each other closely, difficult during the war, insignificant or bad thereafter. The latter displays peaks which do not appear in the former, and this difference conveys a valuable lesson.

When in April, 1917, American organizations, which for two and a half years had been working for France, saw their example followed by the Government, they believed their work would be greatly facilitated. On the contrary, it was rendered infinitely more difficult. The declaration of war, hurled like a thunderbolt from the Capitol, released a new and pent-up force which hitherto had been immobilized: the Red Cross. Buttressed by public authority the Red Cross necessarily followed the official example of relentless centralization. Associated with the Government's efforts, proud of its initial triumph, the Red Cross aspired to the sole control of philanthropy, as the Government had attained sole control of industry. So two opposing forces were in presence. On one side the powerful machine for absorbing all resources, demanding unshared authority;

on the other, the countless war relief organizations, strong with the strength of good work well done, determined neither to disappear nor to be merged in the militarized mass of the Red Cross.

Many unofficial war organizations, especially those of more recent date, were in danger of disappearing. The American Fund for French Wounded, rightly proud of the immense services it had rendered, saw its Boston committee, its San Francisco committee, its Paris services, recommend fusion with the Red Cross, pure and simple, against the wishes of its own executive. The newly formed 'civil section' of the Fund for French Wounded, so recently established in the Aisne, which to its war programme had dared to add a programme of peace rehabilitation, was threatened and opposed. The breaking of the Allied front in March and May, 1918, and the loss of the region in which the civil section had done its work, led to a renewal of the criticisms levelled against its creation. The Fund for French Wounded decided to separate itself from the civil section, which, in a few days, a few hours, under pain of disappearance, had to obtain, in the United States and in France, a new legal status, a new organization and fresh resources. This was the stormy beginning of the American Committee for Devastated France.[1]

[1] This crisis was reached in the midst of the military tragedy of 1918, at the time of the rupture of the Aisne front. It was overcome in less than a fortnight by the energy of Mrs. Lewis Buckley Stillwell and Miss Anne Morgan, then in the United States. The American Committee for Devastated France, created after the break with the American Fund for French Wounded, was registered in the State of New York. Its President was Mr. Myron T. Herrick; its Vice-Presidents, Mrs. L. B. Stillwell, Miss Anne Morgan, Miss Maud Wetmore, Miss Elizabeth Perkins. Miss Elizabeth

The war over, other obstacles arose — created by a changed state of mind. Liberty was restored to philanthropy, as to big business. The autocracy of the Red Cross disappeared. But the comradeship of arms was dead. While the Senate was rejecting the Treaty of Versailles, while the Washington Conference was sitting, while France was aiding the Turks, occupying the Ruhr, or delaying the settlement of her debts, it was by no means easy to work for her. Resistance, both active and passive, had to be overcome. Success would not have been possible if only appeals to sentiment had been made. Sentiment is vain if not enlightened. Emotion is sterile if not canalized.

In the initial stage an appeal was made to the most modern of American arts: the art of publicity. I say art and not business, for in America publicity is taught in universities and has a literature of its own. Publicity has been a national force for fifty years and more. At first business alone utilized this force. Banks and insurance companies looked down upon it. To-day they are its largest patrons. Political parties rely upon publicity to make known their platforms. The American Government utilized it, from 1917 to 1919, to win recruits before the draft was in effect, to educate the American people to subscribe to Government loans, to make popular its war aims, to furnish information about its Associates of whom the American people knew but little. The Pub-

Scarborough was Secretary, Messrs. Humphreys and J. Ridgely Carter, Treasurers, and Mrs. A. M. Dike was President in France. The Red Cross consented to admit the new committee among its auxiliaries, but very soon ceased to aid it.

licity Section of the Committee on Public Information, under William H. Jones, did splendid work. Every means of publicity taught in the textbooks: personal letters, professional circulars, newspaper advertising, posters — at times containing 'reason why' copy, at others 'human interest' copy — were all employed with constant and unvarying success.

Equal success crowned the efforts of private organizations which despite the official cleavage were continuing their pro-French campaign by the same methods. They were working for an ideal, not for business ends; but to achieve its aim the ideal employed business methods. In the one case as in the other, it sought by appropriate means to establish contact with the public, to increase the power of penetration simultaneously with the receptiveness of the public mind. It was what publicity experts call a good-will campaign: seeking to touch the individual in his inmost feelings without allowing the appeal to be deflected by conventional beliefs, preconceived ideas or habits. The case for France was to be sold to the American people on the same lines as Ford cars or Arrow collars.

A primary condition of success in such a campaign is the diversity of objects within an invisible whole. People subscribing to the same fund must not be made to feel that they are paying several times over for the same thing. Instead, therefore, of harping upon an abstract idea, concrete instances were multiplied. If for five years one had kept on appealing for money for the civil victims of the war, the public would have tired. Other abstractions would have

neutralized those presented to it. If, on the contrary, you showed in its true aspect the well-defined thing for which you asked support, if you varied the needs, illustrating them by facts, by figures, by pictures, by signed testimonials, you created, in the place of a slow mental process, a quick sympathetic reaction. One day the appeal was for money to provide luncheons for school children; another, to buy saucepans or kitchen utensils for housewives, or eggs for setting to repopulate the poultry yards, or milk for the babies, or trained nurses to visit the dwellers amid the ruins, or playgrounds for the youngsters, or libraries for the grown-ups, or a bell to hang in the restored belfry of a village church. And the variety of needs multiplied the subscriptions.[1]

After the variety of needs, diversity of methods. Care was had not to fall into the mistake of the French Government, which persisted in sending over generals or politicians to arouse sympathy in the United States, as if the army and politics alone represented France. The flag flown from the Eiffel Tower on the day the United States declared war was displayed in twenty-one cities with its escort of Boy Scouts. Processions of trucks paraded through New York with speakers from among the best-known and most influential women in the city. Boxing matches, organized by one of them to the scandal of the conservative, were attended by the leaders of American society. National bridge tournaments were partici-

[1] The large number of small subscriptions shows to what an extent the various local committees — 373 in number — were able to arouse popular interest.

pated in by twenty-four thousand men and women, playing at the same time in the same cause. By concentric waves, curiosity, the forerunner of attention, was excited, and attention fixed by the renewal of interest.

Yet — and this was the second period — as the cleavage between France and the United States grew wider, these normal methods of publicity no longer sufficed. This, too, at the time when, to perpetuate by endowment the work done in the Aisne, the American Committee for Devastated France needed almost as much money as it had collected during the five preceding years. It was necessary either to abandon the effort or to strike a telling blow. For this business methods were abandoned. In future political methods were to be used. Divided into two great bodies — Republicans and Democrats — American citizens deploy their political activities in two ways: in local organizations which group the regulars and in national campaigns which prepare the election. Organization, campaign, election: such the plan of the American Committee's final effort: the Good-Will Elections of 1922.

Local committees had long since organized the élite; but if an ideal needs the élite for organization, it can triumph only by the support of the masses. The idea was to make the masses vote, which in America they are accustomed and like to do. But to make them vote on what? Not on a direct appeal in favour of France, which would run counter to the then political tendency, but on a side issue, the election of delegates to carry the American gospel to the French

people. The idea was not to say to the public, 'Give money for France,' but, 'Vote to elect American women who on your behalf will carry words of goodwill and friendship to France.' The idea took, and, what is more, it paid. It took because it meant voting, voting for the most popular social class in America — the woman who earns her own living. It was successful also because the mission entrusted to these women was entirely novel: it was the people calling to the people, without official go-betweens. It paid, because each ballot was sold for ten cents, and ten million ballots meant a million dollars to the American Committee for Devastated France.

To obtain this result three agencies were employed: In each centre, a strong local committee.[1] Then

[1] The chairmen of the local committees were: Altoona, Mayor Charles E. Rhodes; Atlanta, Mrs. Albert Thornton, Jr.; Atlantic City, Mayor E. L. Bader; Baltimore, Mr. Elmore B. Jeffery; Binghamton, Mr. Renna Z. Spaulding; Boston, Mrs. Robert W. Lovett; Bridgeport, Mrs. William D. Bishop; Brooklyn, Mr. Henry Joralemon Davenport; Buffalo, Major Charles Pascal Franchot; Chicago, Mrs. Frederick D. Countiss; Cincinnati, Mr. E. W. Edwards; Cleveland, Mr. Joseph P. Harris; Dallas, Mr. Louis Lipsitz; Dayton, Mayor Frank B. Hale; Denver, Honourable Oliver H. Shoup; Detroit, Mr. Frank Cody; Elmira, Captain James Riffe; Fall River, Judge Henry F. Nickerson; Fort Wayne, Mayor William J. Hosey; Grand Rapids, Mr. Fred Z. Pantlind; Harrisburg, Colonel E. J. Stackpole, Jr.; Hartford, Mrs. C. L. F. Robinson; Indianapolis, Honourable Samuel D. Miller; Kansas City (Mo.), Mr. W. B. Davis; Louisville, Miss Mary Johnston; Madison, Mayor Edward A. Fitzpatrick; Milwaukee, Mr. Oliver C. Fuller; Minneapolis, Mr. E. W. Decker; Nashville, Mrs. Frank A. Berry; Newark, Mrs. J. Lewis Hay; New Haven, Major Orville A. Petty; New Orleans, Mrs. Marie Louise de la Vergne; New York, Mr. Arthur Williams; Omaha, Mrs. J. J. McMullen; Paterson, Mr. James Wilson; Peoria, Mr. Grant M. Miles; Philadelphia, Mr. Samuel F. Houston; Pittsburgh, Mr. Augustus K. Oliver; Richmond, Dr. F. T. McFaden; San Francisco, Mr. John L. McNab; Schenectady, Mr. John F. Horman; South Bend, Bishop John Hazen White; Springfield (Mass.), Dr. Parker M. Cort; St. Paul, Mrs. Paul Doty; St. Louis, Mr. Melville

continuous and abundant publicity. Finally the influence of special interests worked up by the candidates themselves. Threefold support had thus to be obtained: from influential individuals to work on committees, from the press to afford the publicity, from business to interest in the balloting the great corporations from whose ranks the candidates were to come. There was no flaw in the plan thus conceived, but serious obstacles had to be overcome, especially so far as the press was concerned. For success it was essential that they be overcome. Overcoming them was a triumph of psychology.

This is neither, they were told, propaganda nor politics. This is a matter of sentiment. There are no official strings to it, and we are entirely free from Paris as from Washington. It is the people of the United States who are called upon to place themselves in contact with the people of France, regardless of timeworn routine. Every American is at heart a crusader and intimately convinced that he could carry on the foreign affairs of his country far better than the people who are doing it. So the suggestion met with spontaneous response. Politics had muddied the relations of the two countries. The people themselves would clarify them. Thus, after receiving the idea coolly at first, the press finally adopted it. They took it up to such purpose that they made the American Committee a gift of $300,000 worth of space and made history in the annals of free

L. Wilkinson; Toledo, Mr. James Brown Bell; Troy, Mayor James W. Fleming; Wichita, Mr. Harry Ortmeyer; Williamsport, Mr. William C. McCormick; Wilmington, Mrs. Florence Bayard Hilles; Worcester, Dr. Kendall Emerson.

advertising. Sixty-two great papers published two million lines of copy — some seven thousand columns — to champion the cause of the Good-Will campaign, to report the elections and their results. The press kindled the fires of competition.[1]

This competition interested the leading industrial and commercial corporations in the United States. What attracted them? First, the novelty of the idea; also, the opportunity it gave them of asserting their power and of coöperating with their employees. By contributing money and influence to the support of the members of their staffs who were candidates, they had both the honour of serving a disinterested cause and of helping those who worked for them to prove their merit. A quaint example of that practical idealism which one finds in all great Anglo-Saxon movements and which explains their intensity. And then

[1] Here are the names of the sixty-two papers: Fall River *Globe*, Dayton *Evening Herald*, Louisville *Herald*, Troy *Times*, Schenectady *Union Star*, Newark *Star Eagle*, Springfield *Union*, Paterson *Press-Guardian*, Dallas *Times-Herald*, Saint-Paul *News*, Omaha *Bee*, Binghamton *Press*, Worcester *Telegram and Gazette*, Elmira *Star-Gazette*, South Bend *News-Times*, Altoona *Tribune*, Williamsport *Gazette and Bulletin*, Nashville *Tennessee American*, Erie *Dispatch-Herald*, Wichita *Beacon*, Atlantic City *Press Union*, Chicago *Daily News*, Philadelphia *Bulletin*, Cleveland *News*, Kansas City *Journal*, Duluth *News-Tribune*, San Francisco *Bulletin*, Fort Wayne *Journal-Gazette*, Topeka *Capital*, Buffalo *Express*, Buffalo *Courier*, Buffalo *Evening News*, Buffalo *Evening Times*, Buffalo *Commercial*, Buffalo *Enquirer*, Buffalo *Telegram*, Detroit *News*, Grand Rapids *Press*, Peoria *Star*, Bridgeport *Times*, Milwaukee *Sentinel*, Kenosha *Evening News*, Wisconsin *State Journal*, Atlanta *Journal*, Cincinnati *Enquirer*, New Orleans *Item*, Baltimore *News*, Boston *Herald*, Wilmington *Evening Journal*, Indianapolis *News*, New York *Sun* and *Globe*, Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, Saint Louis *Globe-Democrat*, New Haven *Journal-Courier*, Denver *Post*, Toledo *Blade*, Pittsburgh *Chronicle-Telegraph*, Minneapolis *Tribune*, Hartford *Times*, Harrisburg *Telegraph*, Reading *Herald-Telegraph*, Richmond *News-Leader*.

words have power. It was a stroke of genius to call the war loans 'Liberty Loans.' The two words 'Good Will,' the slogan of the 1922 campaign, were equally successful. American optimism has always loved such expressions of confidence: good feeling, good will. Amid the monotony of post-war bickering this programme was a relief. It was a modest programme which did not promise to change the face of things, and was unhampered by logic. Good will! Good will expressed by plain people to plain people, to old war comrades somewhat forgotten, by women earning their own living. It is impossible to analyse the springs of popular impulse in detail. In things immaterial, it is the unexplainable which counts most.[1]

The campaign began. It was carried on in twenty-three States and in seventy-eight cities according to the classic rites of political contest. Posters, parades, public meetings, band wagons: all the puerile playthings of democracy. Just as if they had been electing a President of their Republic, there were, one following the other, a nominating campaign to choose the candidates, a balloting campaign to elect the delegates. Any American girl or woman, not under eighteen, working for her own living, was eligible. There were a thousand candidates. Every time that one hundred thousand votes were cast a delegate was

[1] Extract from a letter from the delegate of the Western Union Telegraph Company at Denver: 'Everybody from the porter to the general manager took part individually and personally by getting up lotteries, giving dinners, receptions, and what not. Every one from the smallest messenger to the head of the company put his hand in his pocket almost daily.'

declared elected and thereafter one for every sixty thousand. The number of votes cast was twenty million. The number of delegates elected was two hundred and eighty-nine. The gross receipts totalled two million dollars. In the seventy-eight cities in which the contest was held there was the same delirious excitement as during an election. The streets were filled with crowds and parades. The formation of this feminine embassy about to leave for France excited the anti-French as well as the pro-French. It thrilled even the indifferent.[1]

This embassy represented every form of feminine activity from the most modest to the most exalted, from the least paid to the most remunerative. Among them were a few 'gold star' mothers. It was a faithful and complete image of American womanhood which does not believe that in obtaining the right to vote it has exhausted its claim to equal rights with men and is carrying on the struggle in every sphere of human endeavour. An ideal, the defence of which was entrusted to them, had every chance of penetrating. That it did was abundantly shown by the results, moral as well as material.

Material results? Money was sought and money was found. Bear in mind that it was more difficult to raise ten dollars in 1920 than one hundred in 1918; more difficult to raise five dollars in 1922 than ten dollars in 1920. Yet the Good-Will Elections, with their gross receipts of two million dollars, produced

[1] The Good-Will Elections and their results, however natural they may have seemed to Americans, were looked upon in France as altogether extraordinary, so entirely foreign were they to anything the French people believed to be possible.

at the worst time of political tension more than had been collected in the five years preceding.[1]

Moral results? What slumbered was aroused. What was potential became real. First, because of what the delegates themselves did. Their initial movement had been one of curiosity. Their second was one of interest. In France they were surprised and touched by the welcome they received. When they visited our battle-fields and our devastated regions, when they mingled with official France and with the French people, they learned much about our country that they did not know. The public authorities showed them every attention. French families received them as friends. They discovered a France of whose existence they had no inkling. A country of patient labour, not of frivolous luxury; a country of calm and peace, not of imperialism; a country of silent virtue, not of empty persiflage. The spectacle they beheld was everywhere the same: in the regions where the ruins were being restored and in those whose secular traditions had been spared the ordeal of fire. On their return to the United States

[1] On March 15, 1918, when the American Committee for Devastated France came into existence, it had only twelve thousand dollars in hand. Thereafter its receipts were as follows:

March 15, 1918, to October 1, 1918	$206,000
October 1, 1918, to April 1, 1919	400,000
April 1, 1919, to April 1, 1920	804,000
April 1, 1920, to April 1, 1921	562,000
April 1, 1921, to April 1, 1922	307,000
Good-Will Elections	2,000,000

From 1918 to 1922, or to before the beginning of the Good-Will Elections, the principal sources of revenue had been: War Chests, $509,000; meetings, $742,000; campaigns by local committees, $297,000; special appeals, $116,000; gifts and contributions, $170,000; coöperating bodies, $64,000.

these women told of what they had seen, they spoke and wrote and answered the questions of newspaper reporters, they lectured and decided to meet together once a year. They were listened to. They were believed because they were of the people, because they were the people. France, at a time when she was bitterly assailed, found in them ardent champions.

The change in their opinions was reflected among those who had rendered their embassy possible. It was reflected in business spheres whose support had built up the enterprise and who in countless ways showed their gratitude to the organizers and to the delegates, paid tribute to their methods and to their ideas.[1] It was reflected in the press, which regretted its early hesitation and recanted its initial objections, for it asserted that it was both feasible and desirable to appeal from the troubles of the present to the forgotten traditions of friendship.[2] Even in States

[1] One might quote from the enthusiastic letters written by Mr. Walton L. Crocker, President of the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company; Mr. L. S. Storrs, President of the Connecticut Company; Mr. J. S. Murray, Assistant to the President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway; Mr. James H. McGraw, President of the McGraw Hill Company. Mr. McGraw wrote: 'What I see in this is not only the money, of which France stands in need and which will do a great deal of good, but the fact that you have managed to give expression to the feeling of good will towards France which is growing stronger every day.'

[2] From the Minneapolis *Tribune:* 'We believe that the French Government has made many and great mistakes. That is no reason why the sweet alliance between Americans and Frenchmen should be compromised.' From the Saint-Louis *Globe-Democrat:* 'Whatever one may think of the wisdom of French policy, the innocent martyrs for whom the American Committee is working are entitled to our sympathy.' Mr. H. J. Wright, the editor of the New York *Globe*, wrote: 'As you are aware I went in for your campaign half-heartedly, especially because of my strong conviction that the French Government is making a colossal blunder. I feared that our readers would consider the paper illogical for blaming official France

where the anti-French feeling was strongest everybody was happy that a current of mutual understanding had been restored. An atmosphere of tolerance issued from the fruitless conflicts of diplomacy and finance.

A fugitive atmosphere, I well know, which vanished as did the atmosphere of victory. The fact remains that if nothing was done to preserve it, it had been possible to create it. This, according to one's standpoint, is a consolation or a lesson. The time to draw conclusions has now arrived.

at the same time that it was starting a popular demonstration of friendship for the French people. The result has shown that I underestimated the intelligence of the New Yorker, or his feelings for France. We only had half a dozen letters of protest and countless manifestations of approval. Professionally, I feared that the campaign would appear to be a persistent and monotonous absorber of the columns of our newspaper, and that our news department would treat it like an unwelcome intruder. These fears also were without foundation. The articles furnished interesting copy which fully deserved the commanding position it won and retained in our columns.'

CHAPTER VI

AND AFTER?

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AND AFTER?

THE war brought out more vividly than ever the contrasts with which the past was pregnant. Contrasts of formation, contrasts of evolution, contrasts of aspiration all stand out clearly now without need of searching analysis. Yesterday it was necessary to explain. Now one needs only to look. The great clash intensified things in the Old World and in the New: the weaknesses of the one and the potentialities of the other. The latent contradictions and paradoxes of history were revealed.

Victors or vanquished, European nations lost of their substance, lost man power, lost material wealth. The peoples were slow to realize their losses, and when the scales fell from their eyes they reacted according to their particular traditions. How did the Europe of 1914 compare with the Great Republic? The Europe of 1920 was a reduction of the Europe of 1914, both in size and in wealth. The Russian Revolution had wrenched from the old continent more than a third of its expanse. The principle of nationality, the very soul of victory, had sundered economic units. Half a dozen states were brought into being, and their laborious beginnings were marked by economic strife. Of the thirty million wounded, the fifteen million maimed, the eight million dead that the drama left in its wake, nearly all belonged to Europe. France gave up to battle the soil on which the fury of destruc-

tion was concentrated. On the other side of the ocean, America was intact.

Moral enfeeblement went hand in hand with material loss of substance. To come back, Europe needs time, calm, and brotherly love; much time, much calm, and much brotherly love. But Europe is keyed up to a high pitch, is nervous and divided. Everywhere work is being done in haste. Between the vanquished, who from the depths of their defeat aspire to revenge, and the victors, whose particularisms have been heightened by the Peace, coöperation is chimerical. War, which kills men, kills neither passions, nor interests, nor customs. In the common misery of Europe, the shock of passions, the conflict of interests, the cloying of customs, add to the general exhaustion. America says, 'Forget the war.' But war weighs heavily upon Europe, instils poison into her veins, dominates her destiny. The Old World, bleeding and impoverished, groping after precarious stability, is separated from the New by an abysmal difference of circumstances. Differences of structure, of size, of potentiality, which ten years ago were merely guessed at, now stand out as under a magnifying glass — so clear that they are self-evident.

Everything that Europe lost, America has gained. The war was an asset to America before she entered it, while she was in it, and after she withdrew. Thanks to the war, America more than doubled her power and laid the foundations of a new empire. Thanks to the war, American prosperity, which in pre-war days was a proud boast, has grown in painful contrast to European distress. Half the gold in existence has

found its way into American coffers. In world statistics the index of American wealth soars prodigiously. Potentiality of output, and output itself, follow the same ascending course. The weekly hours of labour lessen as wages increase even more rapidly than the cost of living grows. Low rates of interest, regular crops, the growth of transportation, the ever-increasing bank deposits and savings, the decrease in taxation, move American observers, like Judge Gary, to elation, and foreign observers, like Sir Robert Horne, to amazement.

This productive growth has created a credit inflation, but as a whole American opulence is sound. The banks have enormous reserves. Key industries — railroad, automobile, and construction — are working overtime. The United States exports more automobiles than Europe builds. Real estate transactions never cease. As it were, one half of the people spends its time buying to resell to the other half. The currency depression of 1920 was easily overcome and, in a few months, the record prices of 1917–18 were equalled. America enjoys a calm stability, profitable to all. The Promised Land of Herbert Croly has given more even than it promised, and this too deprives the United States of a common standard with Europe. Between the two continents there is utter disproportion. Ascension here, depression there: two communities the flow of whose life blood, the measure of whose breath, the possibilities of whose growth, are all at opposite poles — positive and increasing for the one, negative and decreasing for the other.

Naturally temperaments are affected thereby. Europe is anxious because weak; America imperious because strong. It had long been her pride — a just pride in the eyes of thinkers like James Bryce — that she had given to man a maximum of well-being. This material progress was one of the forms of her idealism, her aim and mission. More than ever in the triumph of achievement that has followed the war has she made a cult of it. More than one hundred million human beings, fawned upon daily by thousands of newspapers as the Court fawned upon Louis XIV, believe in all good faith that they are better than the men of other lands because they have made themselves happier. All they demand of their leaders is a successful stewardship of that happiness. To elect Harding or Coolidge, a platform of pure materialism suffices. Both parties are agreed on the supremacy of economic factors, so often apparent in American history. In the face of such agreement, even social conflicts are appeased. Millions of workers trust their employers, whose genius has given them well-being. At a time when socialism is making giant strides in Europe, it lags in America, representing a mere three to six per cent of the votes cast in the various elections.

Around this national ideal of productivity there has grown up a world ideal. Mass production, high wages become texts for sermons which Herbert C. Hoover unceasingly preaches. When an American consents to cast his eyes upon what is happening abroad, he retains only what fits in with his own preconceived ideas. The election of Hindenburg to the

presidency of the Reich was quickly forgotten. The return of England to the gold standard attracted far more attention. For that touched a point of common concern; it affected prosperity by increasing the purchasing power of a customer and decreasing the exporting power of a competitor, the while contributing to currency stabilization. On the other hand, countries which have delayed putting their finances in order according to the imprescriptible rules of American finance are fit objects of reprobation and even of indictment. When he condemned the Treaty of Versailles as too political and not sufficiently economic, John Maynard Keynes founded a creed. He was the prophet of a faith distinguished by its intolerance.

Hence the lack of comprehension which has continually opposed America to Europe for the enforcement of that treaty. Europe has lived with it on the political plane, either to strengthen its clauses or to weaken them. On the contrary, the United States has affected supreme indifference to its political and military provisions. As far as the financial clauses are concerned, the United States has seen them in terms of 'reconstruction.' This very word has served only to emphasize our differences. When New York, itching to reconstruct, proposed to arrange credits for an intact Germany, France with her six hundred thousand ruined buildings gave a more concrete and more limited meaning to the term 'reconstruction.' When the Dawes Plan was evolved with the assistance of a well-known American, it aroused the hopes of Frenchmen that reparations long overdue and much reduced would at last be forthcoming; while Americans looked

upon it as a final settlement, in which they insisted upon their share. At no time and on no point has public opinion in the two countries been in substantial agreement. To the United States this has seemed to afford experimental proof confirming her vocation to isolation.

Isolation was impossible, however — rendered impossible by the very causes that prompted it. Though desirous to confine herself to the administration of her own interests, the United States has felt herself attracted to Europe by the imperious necessity of defending them. Apart from her agriculture, more dependent than her industry on foreign markets, the United States by her excess of wealth has been subjected to the law of outward attraction. The accumulation of gold, unceasingly increased by the development of her exports, made a counterpart essential. To avoid congestion, three solutions offered themselves: increased purchases abroad, decreased foreign sales, or the granting of foreign credits. Traditional protectionism made the first impossible; the growth of industry prevented the second, the third remained, and has prevailed. American investments abroad, negligible in 1914, have continually grown. In 1925, they were estimated at more than $10,000,000,000. In 1925 alone, international issues floated in New York amounted to $1,346,000,000, an increase of $140,000,000 over the preceding year. Between October, 1924, and May, 1925, Germany alone had sold $200,000,000 of securities in Wall Street. Thus, whether desired or not, the problem of foreign markets imposed itself. A moneylender, instead of the borrower she had been

before the war, the United States acquired the right to intervene in that European life, whose motives she ignored, looked at askance, and reproved.

To that right was added another. Creditor of Europeans, the United States was also creditor of European Governments. War debts, which had long been let lie, became a preponderant issue in public life and party strife. The collection of these debts, which it is alleged Europe could easily pay if she were moved by the spirit of Peace, is one of the main issues of American politics. Thinking men point to the resultant paradoxes: the United States will be freed of the burdens of the war thirty years before her associates who suffered more than she did;[1] and — as expounded by Winston Churchill — that at least sixty per cent of German reparations will be taken from the devastated and given to the richest and most prosperous of the belligerents. But the views of the minority are powerless against the indifference of the masses and the hostility of official circles. 'We lent them money, didn't we? Then they ought to pay it back.' That is the political contention to which the unenlightened as a whole — and who can be astonished? — add the hope of further relief from taxation. So all assistance to this clamorous, wrangling, and unsettled Europe, ignorant of the secret of sound finance, shall be made subject to the payment of her war debts. Who pays his debts,

[1] Mr. Charles Piez, of Chicago, has shown that if the United States continues paying off her debt at the present rate, she will in thirty years have wiped out the entire cost to her of the war, whereas Great Britain will still owe $5,500,000,000, France $3,800,000,000, and Belgium $907,000,000.

grows rich! That ancient saying, probably invented by the original creditor, is blazoned above the threshold of the United States.

Europe had expected something different, and her deception has widened and deepened the cleavage. The road of effect leads us back to causes. For the error here is of the same ilk as that into which we had fallen concerning the motives of America's entry into the war. We were mistaken in 1920, as we had been mistaken in 1916. Contradictory appeals cross the ocean. But the more Europe begs, the harder America becomes. Of response there is to be none until the cold-blooded calculations of official actuaries have been subscribed to. Does the debtor nation hesitate? Does she plead her difficulties? She is charged with living too high, with being taxed too low, with keeping up too large an army. The press accuses France of unsettling economic conditions by delaying the general return to the gold standard. Official spokesmen freely condemn her, and their pronouncements, wafted across the seas, provoke angry protests on our side. Lack of comprehension has given way to controversial discussion. The question of war debts acts as a coefficient of aggravation upon a situation already sufficiently to be deplored.

Whether the debtor pays or does not pay, the psychological results are pretty nearly the same. The last to negotiate, France is the object of reprobation which strains the oldest bonds of friendship. Great Britain, the first to sign, is not much better treated when she endeavours to alleviate the burden of her payments. Does Great Britain, to defend her ex-

change and increase her dollar holdings, raise the price of her rubber which the United States has to buy? She is at once branded as an enemy of mankind. In scathing language the selfish nations which would sell 'above a fair price' are denounced. The same Senators, who by prohibitive tariffs protect American industry, wax indignant when England protects her production. For must not the well-being of the American community be ensured? Above all, its economic prosperity? If Europe thwarts it, Europe shall know neither financial assistance nor that moral support of which American orators like to talk. And Ambassador Houghton will pass judgment without appeal upon the blindness of the Old World.

France, more than any other country, has suffered by these strictures, which were not directed against her alone. First, because more than any other she had, in her blood and on her soil, borne the brunt of the war; also, because more than any other she had counted upon American support. France, at odds with Great Britain, is not disturbed; centuries of conflict have led her to expect it. On the contrary, a difficulty with the United States seems to France a violation of the laws of nature, so naïve is her faith in the spontaneity of Franco-American friendship. Earlier incidents had passed unnoticed; the debt discussion has revived them. France lives over again the long series of her deceptions: the futility of the sacrifices she and her allies made in 1919 to American ideals; the refusal of the American Senate to ratify the Treaty of Solidarity; the separate peace entered into with Germany without any attempt at previous adjustment with

old war associates; the Washington Conference so adverse to France's navy and her colonies; the insistence on sharing the financial advantages of a treaty while repudiating its obligations; the uncompromising demand for the payment of a debt the counterpart of which had been irretrievably jeopardized by America's withdrawal in 1920; the unjustifiable interpretation of France's capacity of payment; the refusal to grant the French debtor those transfer guarantees accorded to the German debtor. American resentment against France is equalled by French resentment against the United States.

There is where we are in July, 1926; and the conflict presents tragic aspects. Tragic the silent protest of French war-wounded before the statue of George Washington; tragic the cry of Myron T. Herrick a few days previously before the monument of Saint-Nazaire: 'If we were idealists in 1917, are we no longer so now? . . . I do not think that history will say that our attitude towards other countries was marked by humility when we were weak and by arrogance when we were strong.' Millions of Frenchmen and women feel the same way about it as our wounded. Millions of Americans think and speak as does Myron T. Herrick. But the poisonous discussion continues in the stifling atmosphere of politics, removed from all breath of feeling. The responsibilities of a few men become American responsibilities. The hundred million Americans in whose name the discussion continues have but little share in the result. But that result is what it is, and it is an undeniable lack of understanding and of good will.

Beneath the weight of this heavy atmosphere, the old slothful formulas, ever noxious, have become intolerable. It is impossible to go on saying that everything is all right, that things are self-evident, or that they will right themselves because they must. People are beginning to see that if things are to be put right, a sustained effort must be made; that if the old paths of friendship are to be retrod, they must be bathed in light. What have been the mistakes of both sides? That is the first and essential enlightenment both France and the United States must seek.

Let us grant that, since the war, France in her dealings with the United States has almost always taken the wrong course. But let us not content ourselves with obvious excuses, which, revealing unessential shortcomings, allow essential errors to escape.

There is nothing more to be said about the *faux pas* of what is called our propaganda. But if this kind of mistake can aggravate a situation, it cannot create it. For the same reason, in probing our shortcomings, let us leave aside foreign propaganda for what it is worth. In the United States, directed against France in various ways, German propaganda and English propaganda are active. Neither the former nor the latter can be avoided. Germany has the advantage of the influence of her stock; England the advantage of a common tongue. The Germans usually spoil their own game by clumsy errors of judgment. The English, with greater suppleness, have availed themselves of Franco-American coolness to further their naval and financial aims. But the origin of our ills is singularly

deeper, and these contingencies have added but little to them. Suppose that we had been spared the first factors of discord; suppose that the United States had ratified the Treaty of Versailles — the events that followed would not have been greatly changed. For sooner or later psychological dissociation would have led to political dissociation. First we must get at the roots of dissociation.

And here, at the very outset, Frenchmen face an imperative: if they would deal with America, they must first borrow, not American dollars, but American optimism and American love of achievement. Let us make no mistake about it: the reason why France has forfeited America's respect is that, from the winter of 1919 to the summer of 1926 we never have succeeded in anything, or, to be more accurate, we have hidden our rare successes beneath the volume of our recriminations. Just one instance: the amazing reconstruction of our devastated regions by our own unaided resources might have heightened us in American esteem. We went about it in such a way that the United States remembers only the justified criticism to which reconstruction gave rise. We pass for wasters. So long as we do, we shall neither be listened to nor respected: for America loves success. Before negotiating alliances, said Bernard von Bülow, one must be capable of alliances. Before influencing America, one must be capable of action. In order to deal with her, the prestige of success is essential. We had it in 1918. We no longer have it in 1926. We have our reputation to rebuild.

For that we must reëducate our public mind, so

high-spirited at the end of the war, so slackened since. There, rather than in our finances, is our true decadence. Weariness of war, difficulties of the peace, euphoria of inflation — such our excuses. But the ill remains. We suffer from indolence and *abandon* in everything having to do with the general concern of our country. Frenchmen, so keen, so determined, so persistent when their own interests are involved, are listless when the public weal is at stake. At a time when the influence of collective phenomena is so great upon individual destinies, people imagine that they can safeguard the latter without taking the former into account. People no longer vote. In many elections more than forty per cent of the voters stay away from the polls. What worth is there in democracy when nearly half the electors refuse to avail themselves of the right to vote which their fathers won for them? It is the duty of the Government to break down this state of mind by setting the example. But seeing the Government too often behind the times, the peasants, who know that the earth brooks neither delay nor neglect, have lost confidence. That confidence can only be regained by putting a stop to the daily encroachment by the legislative on the powers of the executive and to the chronic paralysis it engenders. Our crisis is a moral crisis born of a political crisis. It is our business to make an end of it.

Also, in those internal discussions which fashion our likeness to the outer world, let us show that we know our own worth, what we want, and where we are going. In the confused and confusing picture presented by post-war France, there is much of short-

coming, but also much of promise. The promise of womanhood, which during the war played so new and so great a rôle and which, despite seven lost years, is ready to make itself felt. The promise of the veterans, who, although often ill-led, retain graven in their hearts the lesson that others have forgotten. The promise of the rising generation, blamed for taking too little interest in public affairs, when perchance public affairs should be blamed for presenting so little attraction. These are some of the features of a new France of which the United States has no inkling, because nothing has been done to make it known. Even our deceptions, which the press heralds far and wide, are not devoid of promise and of hope. For if the rising generation suffers from our non-achievements, if it is astonished that better opportunities do not open before it, if it complains that its desire to count for something in a country of high resolve is disappointed, it is that the Youth of France has faith in the future of France. This rejuvenation, here barely outlined, who seeks to display it before foreign eyes?

To group our forces even though incomplete, rather than to show our weaknesses even though excusable — that is the first result we must attain. The second is not to conduct our foreign affairs with sentimental sloth. France cherishes the desire to be loved for herself and the illusion that she is so loved. I am well aware that, in the case of the United States, the warm outpouring of affection has often encouraged us to that belief. But no outpouring of affection ought to have prevented us from observing and from understand-

ing; nor can it justify the sentimental mistakes with which our path is strewn: the mistake of having believed in 1917 that the United States was going to war for us and not for herself, the mistake of having in 1920 listened to self-appointed American orators urging a policy which was to lead to the separate peace with Germany, the mistake, after our unsuccessful attempt to settle the debt question in 1919, of believing that it could be settled by silence, the mistake of having consented to the reduction of reparations without raising the question of a reduction of our debts. Difficulties, in the hard world in which we live, are overcome neither by silence nor by optimistic suppositions. What is needed is mutual understanding, followed by agreement after interests have been accorded. In order to negotiate, let us place ourselves under the ægis of facts rather than of legends.

And it is well to accustom one's self to accepting people and nations as they are. American history, of which we are superbly ignorant, is not our history, and nothing that we can do will change it or alter its effects. American history, from beginning to end, has evolved around great economic issues. Our history, on the contrary, is all of battles and treaties. Of the last war our people remember the slaughter and the territorial changes. They know where the front gave way and where it was restored. They know the frontiers fixed by the Treaty. They are totally ignorant of the financial and economic factors which decided the fate of battles. Likewise, our people to-day are totally ignorant of the origin of our debts. They

stubbornly confuse what we borrowed from neutral America and what America as one of the allied and associated powers advanced us. To them the schedule of payments and the Dawes Plan remain mysteries. They look upon such matters as secondary and almost unimportant — a deplorable preparation for a negotiation with a nation whose great political battles have been waged over the tariff, the gold standard, or the trusts. Doubtless we are right in believing, as against the belief of the United States, that politics are more important than economics; but one values only that which one knows.

In other words, in order to negotiate we must put ourselves on a footing of equality. But equality presupposes frankness, and, for years, our relations with the United States have been putrefied by the abasement we have continually displayed. As early as 1917 our Chambers were so anxious to flatter the supposed views of Woodrow Wilson that their resolutions of June, 1916, on the war aims of France, could, six months after, have served word for word as a model for his Fourteen Points. Then there was in 1918 the damaging obsequiousness of our press to the head of a country with which our Government had to discuss and treat. At the same time Europeans were outbidding one another in a mad race to obtain American credits; and later there was the same rush of debtors, following Great Britain's example, to make abdication agreements. One often hears the United States blamed for its brutal plain speaking. I hold, after many negotiations with Americans, that such plain speaking is healthy, on condition that one speaks

plainly, too. Incense is a form of homage which Europe has carried to extremes.

And now as to men. When a country has prepared herself for the defence of her interests, she must — if she is to defend them successfully — find a negotiator. Any one, anyhow, anywhere is the French way; and a costly way it has been, especially with the United States. The fundamental differences of surroundings explains why this is so, but it has been abundantly proved by experience. Some of our selections have been viewed as misplaced humour or as provocations. Some human exports are utterly impossible. Any negotiation with Americans demands natural ability and expert knowledge. If the former is lacking, the latter is all the more necessary. It is useless to arrive, as Viviani said, 'like bohemians,' without the documents in the case, without exact grasp of the subject, without means of action on public opinion, without ability to discriminate between arguments that tell and those that are fatal. There have been negotiations wrecked at the first meeting by a name or by a phrase. In such cases, it is useless to blame the negotiators, or to curse fate.

Yet, given proper preparation, our country might well try to bring into play the unexploited capital of friendship of which I have spoken. To do so, it must believe in it. It is just as dangerous in this constantly changing world to take for granted unchanging hostility as it is to rely fondly on presumed affection. American opinion is more mobile than any. France has paid dearly for that knowledge. She may profit by it. The passing lack of understanding

proves nothing for the days to come; it merely proves the errors of yesterday. America almost unanimously was against war in November, 1916; for war in the following April. At the worst of the cleavage, the Good-Will Elections of 1922 in a few weeks created one of the warmest popular movements in favour of France ever seen. With Americans nothing is ever final; everything is always in progress. That is what gives us the right to hope, if we are ready to recast our ideas and reform our methods. Such reform may not be sufficient; but it is certainly essential.

And here, in the ledger of error, appears the American account — no less long nor less weighty than that of France.

The war which intensified the power of the United States also intensified its faults — foremost among which is that overweening pride, the outgrowth curiously enough of the austere faith of the Puritans and of the joyous triumph of mass production. Pride, to which bygone days bore witness, has swollen inordinately since the war. For now Americans, in the full flush of successful achievement, are filled with the unconquerable assurance that alone in a shaken world they possess the instinct of what is right. If ever Americans had doubts about their principles, that day is past. They move forward, these champions of the gold standard and of moral righteousness, anxious to teach all the world the lessons of their success, impatient of contradiction which would be only a waste of time. Without in any way diminishing the greatness of the United States, it may

be said that for Americans to play the rôle for which fate has cast them, they must first become more human.

All the more so as the imperative advice they are so fond of giving to all the universe is very often hopelessly inapplicable to those for whom it is intended. As one of their writers recently remarked,[1] 'when a budget shows more revenue than expenditure, it doesn't take much genius to reduce taxation.' And when nations, in whose faces such prosperity is arrogantly thrust, have been struggling for years with unbalanced budgets and depreciated currencies, such gratuitous reminders imply no lack of self-appreciation or of nerve. These faults are all the more glaring when the woes of such nations are the result of fifty-two months of war, thirty-two of which the self-appointed adviser spent in a state of neutrality and twelve in military inactivity; when the ruins of that war, which the self-appointed adviser escaped entirely, weigh more heavily upon the others because of her sudden dissociation from their community of interest. In the midst of their privileged prosperity, Americans, face to face with a distressful Europe, would honour themselves by some measure of restraint and modesty. Such, however, are not their distinguishing virtues.

It is true that in reply they say that the advent of prosperity depends upon Europe herself and upon France in particular; that it could be attained if a constructive spirit took the place of the fatal habit of always looking to the past, never to the future. Here

[1] In the *New Republic*.

again Americans, too confident of themselves, do not perceive the chasm created by their constructivity. Look to the future? Well said — but can the past be effaced merely by forgetting it? Does it suffice to say, 'Forget the war,' forget the most stupendous catastrophe which has ever shaken this world, in order to obliterate its consequences and reaction? That would be acting in blind ignorance, and blind ignorance is not without its perils. In July, 1924, the constructive spirit was to blame for the belief that war was impossible, and it was the refusal to believe war possible that was responsible for its breaking out. Can one be sure in 1926 that the same constructive spirit if applied to other problems would not give equally hazardous results? In a constructive spirit, facts and experience have been spurned, at the cost of being obliged to make repeated corrections of repeated errors.

In making these comments which, at the bottom of my heart, I believe justified, a scruple is upon me. Recently a Western newspaper owner visited me. He said: 'I am amazed. People tell me you complain of us. I can assure you we love you still. In my own State, in 1922, we raised a quarter of a million dollars for the Good-Will campaign.' The man was honest, and what can be more painful than to risk wounding such honesty, common to countless Americans? Also what better proof of boundless incomprehension than such amazement? No fact I record, no word I write, is to be taken as casting even the shadow of a doubt upon the unparalleled generosity of the American people. But, I hold, that they are to blame for not

demanding of their leaders a better knowledge of the world, over which events of the past ten years have given them so unexpected and so vast an influence. There the responsibility is theirs entirely. Moreover, facts have certain rights, and because a few dozen politicians speak in the name of a hundred million citizens is no good excuse why they should be ignorant whereof they speak. The American politician, who most abundantly dogmatizes about the duties of Europe, Senator Borah, prides himself upon the fact that he has never taken the trouble to visit it. Those of his fellow citizens who cross the ocean in such numbers usually carry back only the most superficial impressions about French life, gained in places where French people never set their feet. Even American diplomats and newspaper correspondents, with a few rare exceptions, remain foreign to our atmosphere. The size of the American colony and the swarms of American tourists keep them in purely American surroundings. Most of them see us from the outside looking in, and not from the inside looking out. They reason about us as they would reason about themselves. Of all the whole world, the United States, despite her cables and her correspondents, is probably the least well-informed about France.[1]

This is why Americans apply to us rules of thought and conduct which are the outgrowth of their history

[1] One instance out of a thousand of this ignorance and indifference. When in 1925, the Caillaux Mission went to negotiate a settlement of our debt, a Washington news agency thought to meet the wishes of the papers it served by sending out every night an extra message about the negotiations. Forty-eight hours later, three fourths of its customers had wired 'Stop service, no interest.'

and the negation of ours. Because in the land in which they have lived for three hundred years they have been spared fifteen centuries of trial, because they have never had a frontier to defend, because in a century and a half they have known only one short invasion which lasted a few weeks, they abusively reject all knowledge of the contrary tendencies and traditions with which a different past has endowed us. Yet is it any fault of ours that for two thousand years we have had to repel invaders by land and sea, that we have had to fight continually to remain masters in our own land, that our political constitution and our social organization are the result, not of a paper found in our cradle, but of centuries of conflict and slow adjustment? That Americans should rejoice because they have been spared these drawbacks — nothing could be better; provided always their leaders do not blame us for suffering what is not our fault nor pester us with advice to forget our past.

If they were more human, more modest, and better-informed, Americans would be able to refrain from many of the unjust sayings and imprudent doings which have made Europe so hostile to them. I have mentioned the attacks on England in connection with rubber. What can be said of the insults to which France has been subjected, either because of her conventions with Central European countries — the substitute for those guarantees of security promised but not furnished by the United States — or because of the inadequacy of her taxation, which, however, is considerably higher than taxation in the United States? What can be said of the pressure brought to bear upon

Belgium, the first victim in 1914, to make the reduction of her armed forces a prior condition to a loan? What can be said of the attempt to force manufacturers to open their books to American customs agents under pain of reprisals? These things are the fruits of distorted vision and lack of tact.

What does this mean if not that American foreign policy is lacking in continuity and cohesion? Americans are always astonished by this charge. They honestly believe that no policy is more stable than theirs. They take pleasure in asserting that since George Washington their foreign policy has not changed. As a matter of fact, they forget that an election sufficed to change the whole course of that policy — that only a few weeks saw popularity transferred from Woodrow Wilson to Warren G. Harding. They forget, too, that their Americanism, which they believe unchanging, has in the course of history assumed successive and contradictory forms, which have now been exactly analysed. First of all Americanism was strictly colonial, then revolutionary, then pan-American, then idealistic, now economic. The actions and reactions are passive, but the aim is ever-changing. There is no country with which international coöperation is more difficult, no diplomacy at once more overbearing and evasive. The United States blames other countries for this difficulty of getting on together. In point of fact every time coöperation with the United States has broken down, the United States herself would seem to have been always most to blame.

And this instability is accounted for by a weakness, well defined by Paul Scott Mowrer. Convinced of their

moral superiority as compared with the Old World, Americans are equally conscious of their political inferiority. No one doubts and every one proclaims that American diplomacy is unequal to European diplomacy and is bound to be worsted in any contest. Under the influence of this phobia the United States has constantly underestimated her own strength and has lost countless opportunities. Since the armistice the United States has frittered away the power placed in her hands by economic conditions after the war. New York has become the financial capital of the world. But American finance still takes its cue from English finance. Both the State Department and the Treasury have persistently in presence of almost unlimited possibilities attached themselves to simple solutions and have run away from difficulties. The separate peace with Germany did not increase the prestige of the United States even in Berlin. The American debt policy has restored to Great Britain that European popularity which Lloyd George and Curzon had forfeited. Never with such great resources has so puny a policy been pursued; never have more splendid opportunities been missed.

This conglomeration of errors — errors of judgment and errors of action — has cost the United States that whole-hearted confidence which Europe reposed in her in 1918. One may argue about the causes and the responsibilities; the fact is there. Europe in 1926 has not a kind word for the United States. America is feared. America is flattered. But none of the admirable traits which Americans possess is appreciated at its worth in Europe. Financial power is the only

means of influence the United States possesses. Once the idol of Europe, she is to-day without a single worshipper. The United States, exactly as France though in a different way, has her reputation to rebuild, her popularity to restore. And, as in the case of France, reformed methods of thought and action are essential if foreign influence is to be regained. There, as well as here, there must be a searching of conscience; there, as well as here, a complete change of method. That is the concern of Governments. But it is also the concern of the peoples.

Also the concern of the peoples? Official action does not suffice for the solution of modern problems. The two efforts, outlined in these pages, show how necessary is the combination of public and private action. Private initiative may precede the initiative of Governments; it may counteract it; it may survive it. But in no case can the latter do without the former, whereby friendship is perpetuated — as George Washington told the Comte de Grasse — beyond the tomb. Between an article by William Randolph Hearst and a speech by Senator Borah, we have seen the power of independent groups, organized and resolute. They watch over the hidden treasure which lives forever in the hearts of the people and is always rediscovered by those who once have held it in their hands.

To reweave the ties and make them strong, Michelet has pointed the way to our democracies: first enlightenment, then enlightenment, always enlightenment. The field is vast for mutual ignorance is

boundless. When lack of information reaches such a point it is useless to talk of misunderstanding. Misunderstanding implies an exception to a rule of understanding; and here of understanding there is none: for we are too ignorant of each other to understand each other. Ignorance even of the present is unbelievable. Nine Frenchmen out of ten believe that the President of the United States is elected by the Congress and that the Congress can overthrow the Cabinet. American Senators asked me in 1917 if compulsory military service existed in France. Even worse ignorance, and more far-reaching, exists concerning the past; for it is the past that floods the present with light. And enlightenment is at all times what both peoples most need. Enlightenment is the essential harbinger of all common feeling, all common thought, all common action. If better days are to be hoped for, mutual enlightenment must be organized.

It must be organized, for it does not exist. Of what worth is the teaching in American history that French youth receives? Nothing, less than nothing, for it contains the germs of all the habitual and poisonous errors. A few pages in our textbooks, crowded with generalities which have done us so much harm. Take the Revolution of 1776, so different from ours in its origin and development. It is represented as the work of our philosophers. One would think that d'Alembert and Rousseau sent Franklin over as their ambassador carrying in his baggage a constitution all ready to be planted in American soil, as was planted in our Jardin des Plantes the cedar of Lebanon brought back in the cocked hat of Bernard de

Jussieu. Take the Civil War. Without the slightest regard for truth, this great economic crisis so essentially American is represented as a simple application of the abolitionist theories of Victor Schoelcher. Thus the French boy, leaving school, fondly imagines that there exists beyond the ocean a nation of one hundred and twenty million human beings, fashioned in our image, imbued with our ideas — a sort of vast branch more prosperous than the parent stem and always ready to oblige it. If one sought to create incomprehension, could it be more perfectly done?

Is young America any better informed about France than young France is about America? It does not seem so. In American textbooks are a few dates of outstanding events. But nowhere in the dry-as-dust pages does one find the faintest trace of anything that could throw light upon the mystery of our national life, upon our great moral crises, upon the tragedies of our slow formation, upon the astounding contradiction of our unswerving attachment to the soil and our insatiable need of foreign influence. Besides, this distant France, which the American schoolboy is taught to love, is the only country which means nothing concrete to him. On the benches of American schools there sit the sons of Swedes, of Germans, of Irishmen, of red Indians, whose desire to learn something of the countries from which their forbears came inspires their studies. France is the only country which has given them no schoolmates. For France does not export men. France has contributed nothing to the melting-pot. France has not woven itself into American life by immigration. So it is all the more

necessary to explain and to interpret France to young America.

Books may help, but not books alone. During the war, under the direction of John Finley and of the American Committee for Devastated France, efforts were made to establish ties by correspondence between the primary schools of France and of the United States. Contact was rapidly created — contact and astonishment which is the first form of child interest. Around facts expressed in naïve phrases were wound impressions exchanged without guile. New blood was infused into the traditional friendship which for more than a century and a half had withstood the neglect of politicians. Since then we have seen young Americans, chosen by merit, coming to France for brief visits which taught them better than any books could have done something of the real France, something of her life in the cities and in the fields. More recently we have seen a band of little Frenchmen crossing the seas, and, under the guidance of men who knew and loved the past, following the trail of their ancestors towards the Great Lakes and the Mississippi. That is less costly than a propaganda bureau, and of more lasting effect. Who holds the rising generation, holds the future.

In the higher branches of learning, much more could be accomplished. In our universities, one chair and one alone is devoted to things American. It is true that in American universities many chairs are devoted to things French. But most of them are specialized exclusively in medical science and historical or literary criticism. Not one is devoted

to a broader explanation of those contrasts, a knowledge of which is essential to future coöperation. Under such conditions what progress can be hoped for? The absurdities an educated Frenchman can voice about the United States are equalled only by the absurdities an educated American can voice about France. To correct this there is neither plan nor system. Certain exchanges of professors have been particularly fortunate. But any attempt at direction and continuity has always been lacking.

When, in 1919, the High Commissariat of Franco-American Affairs threw open our establishments of learning to the officers and non-commissioned officers of the American Expeditionary Forces for a period of six months, there was amazement at the extent of mutual ignorance and an almost childish joy on both sides as it began to be dissipated. But the days were all too short. Demobilization ruled. The boats were waiting to take the Americans back, and soon the old habit of speaking without knowing resumed its hateful sway. Governments, which have found so much time to waste on debts and other discussions have never tried to do anything to counteract them. Benefactors of great wealth, who have been moved to devote some portion of their fortunes to the public good, have rarely thought, when selecting the objects of their munificence, of the necessity of beginning at the beginning; nor have they meditated on the fact that by establishing contacts between peoples who knew nothing of one another, they ran the risk of accumulating future disappointments. And yet this mutual enlightenment is not difficult to provide.

What should it be? The question is answered above. The counterpart of the lessons which have misled our youth: an honest explanation of the obstacles to be overcome if the century-old friendship is to endure, a review of the dangers that friendship runs as contacts become more frequent, a commentary of the thousand and one differences of formation, of circumstances, of tendencies which geography, history, economics, religion and philosophy have raised between the two countries. What an admirable subject and how worthy of condign and enthusiastic treatment! Within its scope the lives of both countries could be presented with all their antinomian contrasts: logic and empiricism; sedentarism and mobility; individualism and solidarity. There one would see, asserting their opposite tendencies of incompatible effects, some of the greatest principles around which mankind evolves, and both countries could be placed upon their guard against those effects. Explanation of differences, elucidation of contrasts, dissociation of prejudices constitute the dough of this bread of enlightenment. The many vain and pompous words, which have rocked our sloth, make such a reaction essential.

Thus, and thus only, discerning or suspecting the consequences of their inverse origins, both countries would become capable of showing greater consideration in matters that divide them. Who knows, if thus prepared, if they would not themselves have arrived at some compromise on the odious debt question? Who knows if the one would not have remembered that, when enacting the law authorizing the war

loans, he had, in the confusion of his unpreparedness, intended to throw his gold into the balance to aid his allies? Who knows if the other would not have remembered that when threatened, for lack of money, with certain defeat, he would have agreed to any terms to obtain the dollars that were to save him? Both might then have asked themselves if the passage of ten short years sufficed to disrupt such a union, to transform the one into an unrelenting creditor, the other into a recalcitrant debtor. And, knowing one another better, it is possible that they would have stopped wrangling and placed their faith in equity. Conflicts are irredeemable only when the opponents are misinformed or ignorant of one another.

Daily life adds many opportunities to those offered by schools and universities. For opportunity to be fruitful, one must know when to seize and how to judge it. Place the two countries face to face over a general question, like the Peace — the meeting will be laborious, incomplete, and ineffectual. Bring them together within the limits of a well-defined problem — they will begin by being mutually astonished and end by respecting one another. When the Americans landed in 1917, their engineers were full of contempt for the French railways. When they left in 1919, they carried away the highest opinion of our railroad administration. The same was true of American doctors, painters, surgeons, musicians, librarians, architects. Everywhere the final result was complete success, giving promise of the widest coöperation. That is the kind of contact we must develop by bringing together, to the exclusion of hostile interests, those who

have something in common, gradually working towards union on a large scale by specialized crystallization.

The same rule applies to action. All the philanthropic and social undertakings which shed lustre on the time of war owed their success to the association of effort for common purposes clearly defined. If among those undertakings the American Committee for Devastated France so perfectly achieved its aims, it was because its action adhered strictly to principles made clear by analysis. It was modest. At a time when great captains of industry, who had dreamed of rebuilding all our ruins, were booking their homeward passages without having done anything, the patient band of noble women, who confined their ambitions to the social reconstitution of a few of our ravaged cantons, succeeded in establishing the closest and most complete coöperation with France. What it built has survived the first workers. The American institutions have passed smoothly and without difficulty into French hands. A service of social hygiene continues to work in a rural district; a modern school of librarians continues to function in Paris, despite all expectations to the contrary, just as, despite all probability, the moral and financial aid necessary to the endowment of these institutions was forthcoming in the midst of the political tension of 1922. As in the case of Government coöperation during the war, experience proves that success is dependent upon preparation. Who submits to this rule succeeds; who disregards it fails. Discussion as to what is feasible is useless when facts have spoken convincingly.

Among many examples of coöperation I have chosen this one, because it was the most complete and because I knew it well. But by narrowing our deductions we should fall into the same error as by exaggerating them. American efforts inspired by public spirit, which war introduced in France, have found an echo there among an élite which will not soon forget. Nothing could have been attempted without American money, nothing could have lasted without French coöperation. Already an active minority of our bourgeoisie, so long repugnant to all social duty, has learned the lessons taught by American example. There has already been some interpenetration, the extent of which may be traced in scientific and literary circles, and which, should it develop, will realize its brilliant promise. The work of the Rockefeller Institute against tuberculosis, the ever more welcome coöperation of our savants, our philosophers, our librarians, our physicians, our surgeons with their American colleagues, has met, if not with that sympathetic understanding which amounts to popularity, at least with studied support which is the warrant of future success. In many spheres practical achievement has taken the place of theoretical speculation. Contacts have led to action.

But the art of action is precisely the definition of the attainable, and that is why dreams of political co-operation will long be dangerous dreams. Twice within one hundred and fifty years such political co-operation has suddenly sprung from exceptional circumstances. It never lasted. War coöperation in 1778; war coöperation in 1917; the former, as the

latter, followed by severely strained relations — such the law in both cases. In all good faith, if it be possible to conceive community of human interest between France and the United States, the basis for their political coöperation is fragile indeed. When Americans defend themselves against European entanglements, they merely are guided by their experience. After Cuba, after the Philippines, we were assured that the United States would henceforth open its mind to the necessities of world politics. Events proved the contrary. More recently we were assured that, after their comradeship of battle, the friendship of France and the United States would forever be unclouded; here again facts have returned their inexorable answer. The great day of political coöperation has not yet dawned. Any attempt to hasten events will be disastrous.

I fear by such reservations to shock noble convictions or respectable hopes. That is usually the case with those who sincerely seek the truth. We must see things as they are. The generation to which I belong has been doubly sacrificed in the history of France. It has left a million and a half of its best sons upon the field of battle. The survivors, after having known the extremes of anguish and the extremes of hope, have borne the burden of war's aftermath which, made heavier by the faults of men, threatens to weigh down our country for many years to come. When that generation has gone, what will remain of it? Wooden crosses in the military cemeteries, and upon the others the brand that they did not know how to put their house in order, that they handed

down to their successors an unfinished task. If it is not vouchsafed to us to finish our task, at least the road must be made clear by us.

This book is a critical essay in search of coming enlightenment. It is also an act of faith. I believe in the possibility of combined efforts by France and the United States. I believe it by reason and by experience. But I also am convinced, and for the same reasons, of the infinite difficulty of success. As others have, I too at times have dreamed of wider possibilities. The risk of achieving nothing, if too much be attempted, stares us in the face. It is time to begin the work at the beginning, and to define our aims. After all, as Maurras once wrote, only our wine-growers have been able, by much patient labour, to mate lastingly the soil of France with American vines. It is our duty to imitate them.

In the hour of extreme peril my eyes saw the great heart and stupendous potentiality of the United States. Would that it turn not aside from France to whom for more than a century we have believed it naturally attracted, albeit we have done but little to promote affinity. If we allow things to go on as they have been going for the past few years, there will be grave danger of a total cleavage. That cleavage must be avoided. Thirty thousand American dead lie in our ravaged soil with our French dead. Our country is the only one to which the United States has entrusted the privilege of guarding her dead. The monuments to the fallen which stand in thirty-eight thousand of our communes, in silent homage to those who fought, remind our citizens of a victory won

shoulder to shoulder. When such emotions are shared, they impose duties no less binding than political and financial contracts. They may help us to forget the wrongs whereof we both complain. But to forget avails nothing except as a preface to constructive progress.

In the years of uncertainty and disquiet which Fate has dealt to us, the threat of Kipling's line, 'And never the twain shall meet,' has often rung in my ears. The twain must meet. Twice, in a century and a half, they have met in the service of great causes. They will meet again, if, on both sides, the obstacle is acknowledged and measured.[1]

[1] Since this book was finished, during its translation and production, a vigorous effort has, to some extent, restored the financial and moral position of France. It is not for me, a member of the Government of M. Poincaré, the architect of this improvement, to pass judgment upon an achievement still in process. I remark only that the mere improvement in the position of France sufficed to appease the more violent Franco-American controversies of the preceding months. Thus is demonstrated by experience one of the conclusions drawn in the closing chapter of this book.

THE END

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